

EL MORRO

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December 2008



Leo Martinez

Aponte says farewell to Army following 30 year career –

In front of family, friends and fellow Soldiers, Col. Margarita Aponte retired on Nov. 7, 2008 in a ceremony at Fort Buchanan. A former commanding officer of Rodriguez Army Health Clinic. Aponte valiantly worked to keep the clinic open during her tenure at Fort Buchanan. Story on Pg. 11.



PR Veterans honored by San Juan Mayor and Fort Buchanan in two community ceremonies.
Page 10



Athletes show off skills at Annual Antilles Elementary School Turkey Trot Buchanan's Pirates Field.
Page 7



Enlisted-to Officer Program — Molina puts on 2nd Lt. bars during ceremony at RAHC.
Page 9



Marc McCormick

Buchanan team apply Lean Six Sigma tactics to processes

Marc McCormick
El Morro

Three Green Belt members of a six person team, (left to right) Osiris Soto, Management Support Technician, Welcome Center; Yaritza Lopez, Plans & Operations Specialist and Magda Rivera; Office Administrator, Fort Buchanan Command Group, along with members Luis Torres, DOIM; José Sánchez, DOL and J.C. García, DPW (not pictured) form a working group which examines garrison practices to find ways to strength processes viability.

Addressing the process the Green belts use, Yaritza López said, "We all have different levels of experience and backgrounds and we hope that managers will be receptive to new ideas."

The six employees involved in the effort are defined by the Lean Six Sigma goal — to create a high performing team by helping team members quickly agree on how they can be most effective and successful (in finding alternative methods to accomplish certain business practices.)

Each of the members attended a two week Lean Sigma Six course at Fort Bragg, N.C., part of a process of the Army's business transformation efforts.

Following the class, the prospective Green belts are tasked with a real world exercise in implementing a streamlined process which pertains to their garrison. In this case, each Buchanan Team member presents a scenario for the group to address to find a best practice.

Magda Rivera's target for the group is to find better ways to streamline Command Group administrative actions. To accomplish the action, the group uses their own experiences, brainstorming sessions and asking Subject Matter Experts to give advice to the group.

"Other experts, such as Graham Castillo, Installation Legal Office, came and added his input on policies and correspondence from a legal viewpoint," Osiris Soto said.

As the team gathers together suggestions and techniques for streamlining a
See Green Belt Page 17



FROM THE COMMANDER:

The Fort Buchanan Mission —
Enable customers to succeed by providing sustainable Base Support and excellent services.



Col. Edwin C. Domingo
Garrison Commander

December —
Thanks to
Veterans

This year we've had the great fortune of signing the Army Family Community Covenant with the Puerto Rico legislatures, the Municipality of San Juan and the Puerto Rico Department of Veterans for the very best people America can offer — our U.S. Army Soldiers. I am awed by their courage, their devotion and sense of duty. The troops and their families are always foremost in my mind, and I thank them for everything they do.

Whether you are serving in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard, you exemplify America's leadership and stand as our nation's strongest shield. During this holiday season, our hearts turn to you who have served and sacrificed so much for our great nation with pride. Let us not forget their families, offering them our support, so that the warmth we bring may help them cope with the absence of their loved ones.

As we gather to celebrate the holidays, we rejoice in your successes and in the freedom that your service and sacrifice have guaranteed for us. But even as



we celebrate, we remember that many of you are standing lonely watch in foreign lands, on distant seas, and in dangerous skies — safeguarding peace and protecting our nation at every point on the globe.

I know that each of you will be able to look down at your children or your grandchildren and say that you were there. That you helped to make that possible, which you have done. And you helped to bring freedom to literally millions of human beings — men, women

and children that you see on the streets. You'll look back with a great deal of pride on the history that you've made and you are making history. That is what you're doing, and it is a proud history indeed.

As 2008 draws to close, the Fort Buchanan command and staff extend their warmest wishes to you and your families during this holiday season. At this special time, we pause to reflect on our many blessings and freedoms. Our nation is very grateful for your courage and selfless service at this important time in history. You are a tremendous force and we are proud of your commitment to keep the fire of freedom burning. Whether you serve on distant shores, or close to home, we wish you and your families' peace, health, and happiness in the coming year. Above all, let us not forget that peace starts with us, within us, within the circle of our family and friends, and that from there is spreads outward. By doing this, eventually the promise of peace on earth will be fulfilled at last.

Feliz Navidad!

Army Family Covenant

We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day.

We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their families.

We are committed to providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service.

We are committed to providing our families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

We are committed to building a partnership with Army Families that enhances their strength and resilience.

We are committed to improving Family readiness by —

- Standardizing and funding existing family programs and services.

- Increasing accessibility and quality of health care.

- Improving Soldier and Family housing.

- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services and child care.

- Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members.



CSM David Davis
Fort Buchanan
Command Sgt. Maj.

I thought I'd change things up a bit and add a little humor to this month's article. Here is some mindless information to test your skill and knowledge.

Evaluations — the things people say, percieve

- 1) How long did the Hundred Years War last?
- 2) Which country makes Panama hats?
- 3) From which animal do we get catgut?
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
- 5) What is a camel's hair brush made of?
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
- 7) What was King George VI's first name?
- 8) What color is a purple finch?
- 9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
- 10) What is the color of the "black box" that records all communication between pilots

and traffic control in a commercial airplane?

(See Page 17 for answers.

And, do thing peek- To my witt- any in the longer day the importance of the evaluation (NCOER and OER), which is considered the single most important item in your promotion file. As your Garrison Command Sergeant Major, always looking out for your best interest, I found some examples (yes, actual examples) of bullet comments you may want to stay away from



and hope never make it on your evaluation.

- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.
- This officer is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't-be.
- This NCO could not shoot the muzzle plug off his own gun tube.
- I know of no national emergency that would justify promoting this NCO above his current grade.
- She sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
- He demonstrates the unique ability to de-motivate Soldiers at a moments notice.
- He displays no morale courage and cries in formation.

- When this officer opens his mouth, it seems that this is only to change whichever foot was previously in there.
- He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.
- He would be out of his depth in a park puddle.
- This officer reminds me very much of a gyroscope — always spinning around at a frantic pace, but not really going anywhere.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- This medical officer has used my ship to carry his genitals from port to port, and my officers to carry him from bar to bar.
- Since my last report, he

See CSM — Page 17



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Capt. Anthony John

Col. José Gotay, deputy commander for the 1st Mission Support Command presents a flag of appreciation to CW5 Robert Johnson for his efforts during his tenure as the 1st MSC Property Book Officer.

1st MSC in the news...

- Retention unit receives award, Pg. 19.
- Command discipline workshop, Pg. 19.
- Shield of Strength, Pg. 19.
- MROC, Pg. 20.

Mayra Rodriguez, Lt Cmdr. Jose Medina, and Maritza Vargas, members of the TRICARE team located at Fort Buchanan become members of the 1st Mission Support Command family by accepting the "Garita" in the time honored tradition of accepting a Soldier's unit patch.



Capt. Anthony John

Finding peace within yourself

Staff Sgt. Angelica Thompson
Ft. Buchanan RSO

In this article I would like to talk about finding peace within. It may come at a much needed time for most of us, as this past September was designated as the month for Suicide Prevention Awareness.

Our Father who is in heaven is the source of life, wisdom and joy.

Think of everything that is around us, those things which surround us that we are too busy to enjoy - the rain, sunshine, the animals, nature.

It is God who supplies the daily needs of all His creatures.

In the beautiful words of the Psalmist;

"The eyes of all wait upon thee;
And thou givest them their meat in due season.
Thou openest thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing."
Psalms 145:15

I often tell my family and colleagues to have genuine peace, it must come from having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Instant gratification just doesn't do it. God made man

perfectly holy and happy. It is the transgression of God's law, the law of love, that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering, God's love is revealed.

Take a minute from your day to give God thanks. Recognize the blessings around you, the fact that you can breathe fresh air, the fact that you are given another chance to see a new day, experience new things and give of yourself to others.

If you can not pray, he will understand a simple, "Thank you Lord!" Sometimes this is very sufficient, and trust me, you will feel better because you'll know that He is there.



Staff Sgt. Angelica Thompson



Courtesy Photo

Members of the Fort Buchanan Religious Services Office and National Guard and Reserve chaplains met with Chap. (Brig. Gen.) Bryan Hault, Army National Guard, during his visit to the garrison Nov. 5 through 8, 2008.

National Guard chaplain visits Fort Buchanan

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Kenneth Lawson
Installation Chaplain

Nov. 5 through 8, 2008, the senior Army National Guard chaplain, Chap. (Brig. Gen.) Bryan Hault from National Guard Bureau, visited Puerto Rico and Fort Buchanan.

Chaplain Hault met with senior National Guard officials on the island and spent time with National Guard chaplains, USAR chaplains and chaplain assistants and the Fort Buchanan Installation Chaplain's Office.

Chap. Hault conducted a training session while he was at Fort Buchanan for all National Guard, USAR and Fort Buchanan chaplains and chaplain assistants.

Specifically for the National Guard, Chap. Hault reviewed chaplain training, educational requirements, promotions, recruiting and vacant chaplain positions.

The Religious Support Office at Ft. Buchanan is one of the few installation chaplain offices in the Army that is completely networked with chaplains from the National Guard and the USAR.

The chaplain section of the Fort Buchanan Hurricane Response Plan, which completely integrates all military chaplains on the island for area religious support coverage, is taught as a model at the Army Chaplain School at Fort Jackson, SC.

Chap. Hault said of his visit, "Everything was well organized and went smoothly. The chaplains and their assistants treated me very well. It was a profitable trip."



Brig. Gen. Bryan Hault



Marc McCormick

Conference in session...

Brig. Gen. David S. Elmo (center), commanding general, 1st Mission Support Command, met with Fort Buchanan Commanding Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo, second from right) to discuss matters of mutual interest at Fort Buchanan. Also attending was the 1st MSC Chief of Staff Miguel Issac, left, Fort Buchanan Command Sergeant Major David Davis, right, and 1st MSC Sergeant Major Manuel Félix.



U.S. military bugle calls sound off for Buchanan

CSM David Davis

Ft. Buchanan Command Sergeant Major

When I arrived to Fort Buchanan in April 2008, one of my first initiatives was to re-establish the long-standing tradition of military bugle calls to announce certain scheduled and non-scheduled events on the installation.

Shortly after arriving I received dozens of comments from Soldiers and civilians alike as to why Fort Buchanan does not play Reveille, Retreat or Taps, as well as other bugle calls.

The comments alone told me that Fort Buchanan was a military installation with great history and love of Army tradition.

Technicians and contractors came from the states to diagnosis the problem and provide an estimate to either repair the system or replace it all together. I was informed the electronic system that played the daily bugle calls was in disrepair and would require nearly \$70,000 to \$100,000 to replace.

Fast forward to the late afternoon of Wednesday, November 5, when precisely at 1700 I heard the beautiful sounds of Retreat and To The Color signaling the end of the official day.

I immediately called the Fort Buchanan Police Desk where the system is manned to speak to the individual who made the system come "alive" once again.

The individual answering the phone was Army Police Sergeant Victor Labrador, who in fact was the "technician" working on the notification system.

I learned that Sergeant Labrador just returned from an overseas deployment as an Army Reservist and also was trained on how to operate and repair the notification system.

Within days of returning, Sergeant Labrador looked at the system and was able to repair the problems that prevented the playing of the bugle calls. Needless, I can't tell you how good it is to have Sergeant Labrador back on the job!

Now that you know the story of the broken notification system, let me share with you the history of the bugle call and why it's important to carry on the traditions of the Army.

The bugle was essential to all military communication until its displacement by electronics. The primary bugler was assigned to the headquarters staff and kept close to the commander at the front.

Soldiers were quick to learn the calls of the bugle, and on a routine day at least four, and as many as ten calls, were made. The enlisted Soldier's life was regulated by bugle calls — the daily routine included breakfast, dinner, and supper calls; fatigue call, drill call, stable and water calls, sick call, and taps.

The bugle was first used as a signal instrument in the American Army during the Revolutionary War to announce certain scheduled and non-scheduled events for military units. The bugle calls evolved from Continental Army contacts with the French and English armies during the Revolutionary War. Each call melody carried a different and specific meaning. While it may have been difficult for a new private to learn the meaning of all the calls, you can be sure they picked up on it very fast. Hearing a horn blowing in the morning telling you to wake up, one telling you it was time to eat, or another telling you it was finally time for bed become familiar very quickly.

In the early years of our nation's independence, each arm and branch of the Army developed its own set of "sound signals" — drum beats in the Infantry; bugle calls in the Cavalry and Artillery. By the end of the Civil War the Artillery, Cavalry, and Infantry were sounding bugle calls.

In 1867, General Emory Upton directed Major Truman Seymour, 5th U.S. Artillery, to prepare a definitive system of calls with the object of eliminating the confusion evident during the Civil War. Major Seymour reviewed all the calls then in use in the Army. He discarded some, revised others, and finally fashioned the set of calls which have remained in use up to the present time.

In 1867, bugle calls were standardized for all branches of the Army. As weapons became more powerful and the ranges of these weapons increased, the function of the bugle call became less and less useful.

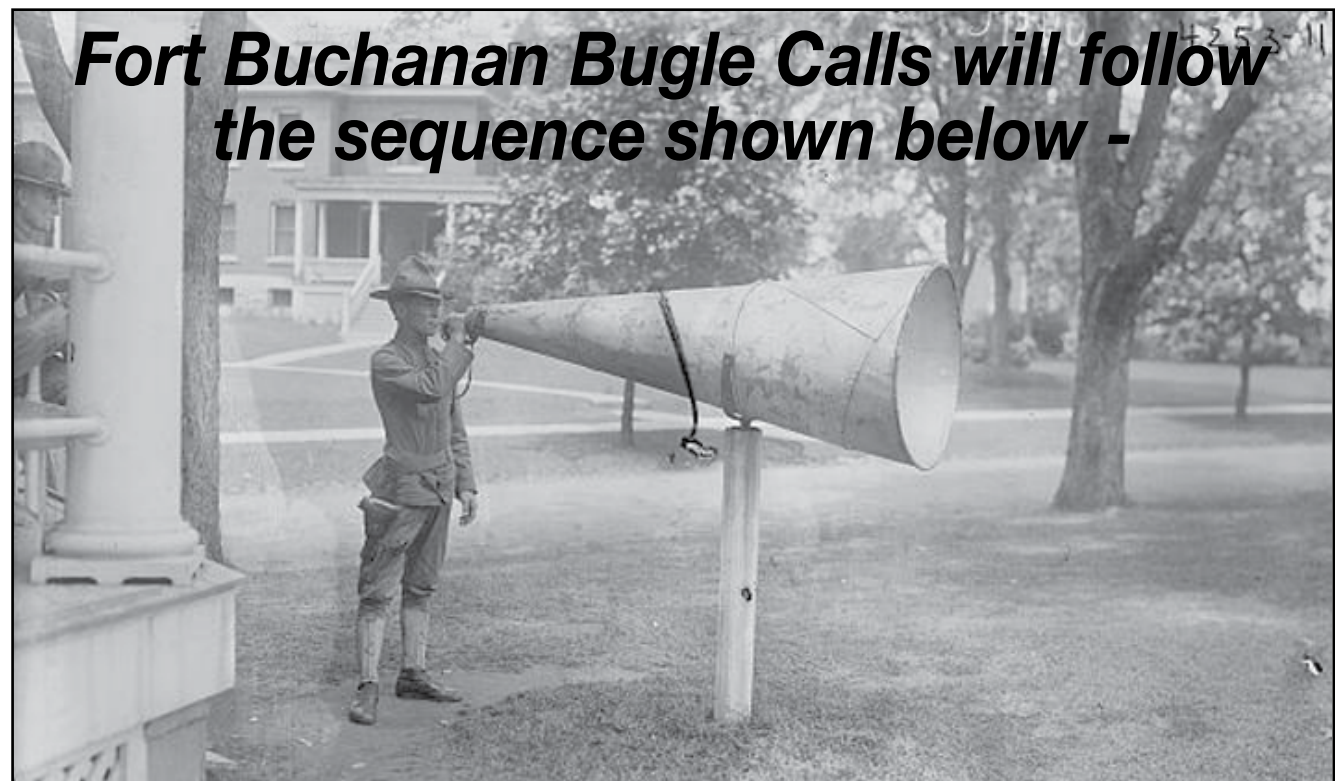
Technology has taken over many of tasks and communication typically associated with the sounds of the bugle, however; on nearly every permanent base, fort, post, or camp run by the United States military bugle calls are still used daily both as a functional and ceremonial device.

There are four basic categories of bugle calls plus a ceremonial category —

- Alarm Call — signal that immediate action is necessary, typically used in case of fire (both burning and enemy varieties)
- Formation Call — signal that units should assemble

in formation, or that they should perform a specific action while in formation

- Service Call — signal service oriented events and routine activities such as wake-up, meal time, sick call, etc.
- Warning Call — signal that an event is about to happen, and to be prepared
- Ceremonial Call — Music normally conducted by a military band at official military formations and ceremonies can be played by one or more buglers if a band is not present.



Reveille — 0600 hours

Reveille is played at dawn to awaken the troops for morning roll call. It is also used to accompany the raising of the National Colors.

All military personnel within sight or sound of the ceremony are required to render honors to the nation.

Military personnel outside will face the flag or direction of the music, come to attention and render the hand-salute.

If in a vehicle, the vehicle should safely pull to the right side of the road and stop.

The driver or individual in charge of the vehicle will exit the vehicle, face the flag or music and render the proper courtesy.

Civilians are encouraged to render the proper courtesy to the National Colors by removing any headgear and placing their hand over their heart.

Retirees and veteran's are now authorized to render the hand-salute.

Mess Call — 0730 hours

Mess Call is played to signal personnel that it is meal-time.

Mess Call — 1200 hours

Mess Call is played to signal personnel that it is meal-time.

Mess Call — 1630 hours

Mess Call is played to signal personnel that it is meal-time.

Retreat and To The Colors — 1700 hours

Retreat is played to signal the end of the official day.

To The Colors is played at the last note of retreat.

To The Colors commands all the same courtesies as the National Anthem.

All military personnel within sight or sound of the ceremony are required to render honors to the nation. Military personnel outside will face the flag or direction of the music, come to attention and render the hand-salute.

If in a vehicle, the vehicle should safely pull to the right side of the road and stop. The driver or individual in

charge of the vehicle will exit the vehicle, face the flag or music and render the proper courtesy.

Civilians are encouraged to render the proper courtesy to the National Colors by removing any headgear and placing their hand over their heart.

Retirees and veteran's are now authorized to render the hand-salute.

Tattoo — 2100 hours

Tattoo is played to signal that all light in squad rooms be extinguished and that all loud talking and other disturbances be discontinued within 15 minutes.

Taps — 2200 hours

Taps is the last bugle call of the day and is played to signal that unauthorized lights are to be extinguished.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 707-3414. And, as always, thank you for your continued support.

Army Strong!

Resources for article —

- FM 22-5 - Drill and Ceremony

FM 12-50 - US Army Bands

http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1810843

<http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/land/bugle.htm>

- CSM David G. Davis

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"Every single man in this Army plays a vital role. Don't ever let up. Don't ever think that your job is unimportant. Every man has a job to do and he must do it. Every man is a vital link to the great chain." — Gen. George S. Patton, Commander, Third Army.



Avoiding the holiday blues

Myrna M. Llanos
Prevention Abuse Coordinator

Nationwide in 2005, alcohol was present in 24 percent of the drivers involved in fatal crashes (BAC .01-.07, 4 percent; BAC .08 or greater, 20 percent). Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

Since 1981, every President of the United States has proclaimed December "National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month" to help underscore the public's commitment to preventing impaired driving and promoting the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs. The month of December and the New Year's Eve holidays (plus Three Kings Day in Puerto Rico) are also often highlighted by significant increases in law enforcement efforts to combat impaired driving such as the use of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols.

That's why the Ft. Buchanan Army Substance Abuse Program each year joins other national, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials to remind everyone during the holiday season to always designate a sober driver before each holiday party or event involving alcohol.

The holiday season is supposed to be a time for family, friends, and festive celebrations, but it is unfortunately also a time when we see a tragic jump in the number of alcohol-related highway fatalities each year between Thanksgiving and New Year's. We are out early reminding everyone this holiday season — "You drink and drive. You lose."

Designating a sober driver before the party begins is just one of several, simple steps to remember to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving.

Here are other simple reminders for a safer holiday season —

- Don't even think about getting behind the wheel of your vehicle if you've been out drinking.
- If you are impaired, call a taxi, use mass transportation, or get a sober friend or family member to come and get you; or just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober
- Remember — "*Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk.*" Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.
- If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead, always offer alcohol-free beverages during the event, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.



Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant and not the way you want to spend your holiday season.

As a community, and larger society, we have a moral obligation to take care of people we come into direct contact with.

When people drink, the ability they have to make rational decisions is lessened, as well as their reflexes.

You also have an obligation to protect innocent people from any harm by keeping friends and family members from picking up the car keys if they have consumed alcohol — even one drink!

A little effort on your part could mean the difference between life and death.

Is it all worth it? Do you want your life story to become a documentary? Think about it.

Editor's Note — Part of the information in this article was retrieved from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistical Analysis.

If you have a question about substance abuse, email Myrna Llanos at myrna.llanos@us.army.mil or call 707-3125.

Remember, this holiday season — "You Drink and Drive. You Lose."

The FT. Buchanan Army Substance Abuse Program Staff is —

- Gisela Aponte, Alcohol and Drug Control Officer.
 - Myrna Llanos, Prevention Coordinator.
 - Jose Berrios, Drug Testing Coordinator.
- We wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

Drunken driving or drugged driving? What are the stats?

Myrna M. Llanos
Prevention Coordinator

Driving while either intoxicated or drunk is dangerous and drivers with high blood alcohol content or concentration are at greatly increased risk of car accidents, highway injuries and vehicular deaths.

Every single injury and death caused by drunk driving is totally preventable. Although the proportion of crashes that are alcohol-related has dropped dramatically in recent decades, there are still far too many such preventable accidents. Unfortunately, in spite of great progress, alcohol-impaired driving remains a serious national problem that tragically affects many victims annually.

Young people are over-represented in driving accidents involving alcohol. In a recent year, people aged 16 to 24 were involved in 28 percent of all alcohol-related driving accidents although they make up only 14 percent of the U.S. population. Young people are also over-represented in drinking driver injuries and deaths. Teens and other young people may be over-represented in drunken driving accidents because, in part, they tend to

- Be relatively inexperienced drivers.
- Be relatively inexperienced consumers of alcohol.
- Have a false sense of invincibility and immortality.
- Be more likely to use illegal drugs.

In the minds of many teenagers drugged driving is safer than drunk driving. In reality marijuana can affect concentration, perception and reaction time up to 24 hours after it's smoked. That's much, much longer than alcohol can affect behavior. But while marijuana might affect behavior much longer than alcohol and be much more dangerous for driving, people are very rarely arrested for driving while drugged. People get pulled over for erratic driving, but police would always let them go because they passed breathalyzer tests.

The head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration encourages states to test for drugs after a crash. Currently, very few states ever test for illegal drugs under any circumstances. It appears that very few illegal drug users are ever apprehended for driving while drugged. It's a virtually ignored problem so it's understandable that teenagers think driving while drugged is safer than driving while drunk.

Drugs and driving may be a bigger problem than generally recognized.

It's easy to forget that dry statistics represent real people and real lives.

Editor's Note — Part of the information in this article was retrieved from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

If you have a question about substance abuse, email Myrna Llanos at myrna.llanos@us.army.mil or call 707-3125.

Tips on Suicide Prevention

Risk Factors:

Risk factors are those things that increase the probability that difficulties could result in serious adverse behavioral or physical health. The risk factors only raise the risk of an individual being suicidal it does not mean they are suicidal.

The risk factors are often associated with suicidal behavior include:

- Relationship problems (loss of girlfriend/boyfriend, divorce, etc.).
- History of previous suicide attempts.
- Substance abuse.
- History of depression or other mental illness.
- Family history of suicide or violence.
- Work related problems.
- Transitions (retirement, PCS, discharge, etc.).
- A serious medical problem.
- Significant loss (death of loved one, loss due to natural disasters, etc.).
- Current/pending disciplinary or legal action.
- Setbacks (academic, career, or personal).
- Severe, prolonged, and/or perceived unmanageable stress.
- A sense of powerlessness, helplessness, and/or hopelessness.

Suicidal Risk Highest When:

- The person sees no way out and fears things may get worse.
- The predominant emotions are hopelessness and helplessness.
- Thinking is constricted with a tendency to perceive his or her situation as all bad.
- Judgment is impaired by use of alcohol or other substances.



U.S. Army Soldiers and civilian personnel now have access to language training designed to get them speaking another language even faster.

The latest version of the foreign language software offered through Army e-Learning, a component of the U.S. Army Distributed

Learning System, uses technology to create an environment of complete immersion in the studied language.

Courses in Arabic, Farsi and Pashto are not only making measurable differences in basic communication skills, but may also help Soldiers achieve their missions related to the Global War on Terror.

For more information, visit Web site www.dls.army.mil/news/DLS_



CYS facilitates families experiences at Buchanan



CYSS is looking for Homeschooled children

Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) can support homeschooled students in a variety of ways: Sports, Instructional Classes, Computer Labs, Arts & Crafts, Post Secondary Preparation Opportunities, Scholarships, and much more.

For more information, please contact
Fort Buchanan's CLEOS Director at 787-707-3434

Gladys Colón-Algarín
CLEOS Director

CYS Parent Participation Discount Program —

Do you have a child enrolled at the Child Development Center or at School Age Services? CYS has a program where you can earn credits that can lower your monthly child care fee.

Parents are encouraged to join in the fun. There are a variety of ways that parents can participate in their child's program. Parent Participation Discount Program enrollees may earn credits by participating in certain CYS approved activities. Examples of volunteer activities for which certificates may be offered might include but are not limited to — field trip assistance, assembling toys/equipment, or providing assistance with a particular service project within the classroom such as painting or helping conduct an activity. For additional information, contact the Education, Liaison and Outreach Services Office at 707-3787/3434.

Character Counts —

At CYS Character Counts!

CYS participated of the National Character Counts! week. During the month of October, CYS conducted several activities as part of the Character Counts! week.

Character Counts is a framework based on basic values called the Six Pillars of Character — trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Evelyn De La Cruz, CYS Program Assistant, facilitated several activities for each one of the pillars at all CYS programs. Some of the activities that were conducted included but were not limited to — Members of My Community at the CDC where several parents joined their children in the activity, a Puppet Show at SAS by youth from the Teen Center utilizing the Character Counts! special puppets; a Character Counts! Fun Run at the Pee Wee Field and Youth from the Middle School Program visited several installation offices to explain the meaning of Character Counts! and encourage adults to follow the pillars.

Youth Sponsorship —

Youth Sponsorship is a program designed to assist youth to navigate the challenges they encounter as a result of their parents' permanent-change-of-station moves. All youth between the ages 8-18 can request a youth sponsor before, during or after their move to the Fort Buchanan area.

A youth sponsor can provide you with information about schools, shopping, culture or maybe become your new friend! Youth sponsorship is coordinated by the Education, Liaison and Outreach Services Director Director and will match sponsors to new youths according gender, age/grade and interests/hobbies. Youth sponsorship plays a very important role in the moving process. Families face many questions and concerns are expressed when preparing for moves. For everyone, including youth, the fear of the unknown is scary and very real. Some questions might be —

- Who will be my friends?
- What will my new school be like?
- What activities/sports are available?
- Will I fit in?
- What are the other kids wearing?

A youth sponsor will help provide the answers to these questions and many more. A sponsor's job is to help eliminate the unknowns. The most important part of being a youth sponsor is to be a friend and make the new student feel welcomed.

A youth sponsor will —

- Introduce the newcomer to other students at school and the youth center.
- Work with new youth coming to Fort Buchanan, to help ease their transition.
- Assist with planning and developing ongoing activities and events.
- Identify, meet and help incoming teens by providing them with friendship, a warm welcome and information about the local community and installation.
- Maintain contact with the new youth before, during and after transitioning to Fort Buchanan.
- Use a variety of communication techniques: email, telephone, etc.

If you are PCSing soon, contact the Education, Liaison and Outreach Services Director Director at 787-707-3434.



Photos Marc McCormick

CDC celebrates Thanksgiving



The Fort Buchanan Child Development Center staff, children and their families celebrated the arrival of the Holiday Season with a Family Luncheon conducted on November 25. 120 parents participated in the event.



Antilles Elementary School students participate in Turkey Trot



Photos Marc McCormick



(Above left) Antilles Elementary School girls await the start signal for the start of the annual 1 mile Turkey Trot. (Below left) A cloudy, rainy day couldn't dampen the spirits of the 3rd Graders. (Above) The three winners of the girl's run were — 1st Place Cheyenne Highland; 2nd Place Sophia Rodriguez and 3rd Place Abnis Olmo.



The boys turned in good times for their Turkey trot competition. The winners were — (left to right) 3rd Place winner Alejandro Julian; 2nd Place winner Edwin Mercado and 1st Place winner (also pictured right crossing finish line) Angel Graulau.



A great Noche Puertorriqueña

Marc McCormick
El Morro

Each year Antilles High School celebrates Puerto Rican culture with a Noche PR night at the high school.

Each year the students, faculty and parents put on an evening of music, entertainment and Puerto Rican foods and artisan wears to raise money for school activities for the year.

The Sonora Ponceña played this year after performances by elements of the AHS Music Department. This year, to the delight of the crowd, there was a music set by beginning guitarists featuring a solo by Edwin Cruz, 10th Grade, accompanied by guitar and music teacher Rafael Sosa.

The full Antilles High School choir performed a set of songs arranged and conducted by AHS music teacher Sonia Bettancourt.

Off-stage parents and supporters set up refreshment stands offering Puerto Rican foods

and drinks. In the spirit of family and community and garrison support (he has a son attending AHS), Fort Buchanan Commanding Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo worked at the pina colada stand all evening. Inside the AHS cafeteria food was also available for people who like to dine inside.

Also, "vendors" (students) had display tables and strolling sellers offering patriotic mementoes. At the check-in ticket table there were t-shirts for sale.

The event started at 5 p.m. and ran until 11 p.m. There were hundreds of parents and students who attended the event in support of the school and the community. Department of Emergency Services police provided security and, most importantly, handled the huge volume of traffic coming to and departing the event safely and efficiently. Each year, DES police put in many hours of what could be high stress work seeing that everyone enjoys themselves without worries. They should be highly commended for their



Photos Marc McCormick

T-shirt sales helped raise funds for student activities at Antilles High School Annual PR Noche activity.



(Above) parents helped out working booths like this one to raise money. (Below) A student sells souvenirs.



AHS Music



Photos Marc McCormick

(Above) Guitarist and music teacher Rafael Sosa and 10th Grader Edwin Cruz perform specially arranged guitar songs for the audience at Antilles High School Noche Puertorriqueña. (Middle) The AHS Choir provided a musical set arranged by music teacher Sonia Bettancourt (below).



AMS students also participate in annual garrison Turkey Trot

Ruben Ortiz
Antilles High School

November 25th the Buchaneers of Antilles Middle School held their Annual Turkey trot. Things were goblin in the halls as AMS welcomed parents, community members and excited students to race for the ultimate prize — a Thanksgiving turkey! Under the direction of Gerson Gurell, Ruben Ortiz, Maribel Colon and Jimmy Tosado, students from grades 5 through 8 showed off their running skills.

The winners are —

5th Grade Boys
1st place - **Jorge Santiago**
2nd place - **Ricky Arzola**
3rd place - **Michael Santiago**

5th grade Girls
1st place - **Ashley LaSalle**
2nd place - **Ariana Figueroa**
3rd place - **Zoraya Perez**

Not only did the kids get involved but the faculty as well.

Frank Bauldrick and Tim Proskauer wisely put it saying, "This is what keeps us young. if the kids can do it, so can we."

Unfortunately, no turkey win for them but a grand Hoorah to all you Buchaneers on a job well done! The family's of the winners in the AES and AMS races won a turkey for the holidays.

The race was 1 3/4 miles. More than 120 runners participated and there were prizes for every participant.

6th Grade Boys
1st place - **Carlos Arzola**
2nd place - **Christian Kercado**
3rd place - **Jan Albino**

6th Grade Girls
1st place - **Suzette Vazquez**
2nd place - **Soleil Rios**
3rd place - **Natalia Melendez**



7th Grade Boys
1st place - **Jorge Correa**
2nd place - **Wilfredo Muñoz**
3rd place - **Ricardo Cintrón**

7th Grade Girls
1st place - **Wilmayra Colón**
2nd place - **Shalimar Soto**
3rd place - **Dayra Díaz**



Courtesy Photos

Get Ready, Set Go! Antilles Middle School students run for the turkey during the Annual Turkey trot.

8th Grade Boys
1st place - **Carlos Marchand**
2nd place - **Francisco Bermudez**
3rd place - **Bryant Miranda**

8th Grade Girls
1st place - **Carim Morales**
2nd place - **Sidney Gonzalez**
3rd place - **Paola Buitrago**



Evelyn de la Cruz
Character Counts Coordinator

The U.S. Army concerns itself not just with its troops but with the success of their families. Character education is a foundation stone of that commitment and tradition.

What is Character Counts?

Army Child, Youth & School Services is partnered with Character Counts!, the country's most widely adopted character education framework.

It is already active on several Army posts. Everyone benefits especially the children, who get a community-wide, effective education about the centrality of their character in determining the course of their lives, and society.

Natural partners with aligned values.

Army CYS and Character Counts! are natural partners.

Both organizations know that parents have the frontline responsibility for teaching values to their children, and both believe that other institutions, including schools play a vital supporting role.

The Army promotes the core values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

Character Counts! promotes values called the six pillars — trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

At Fort Buchanan we promote Character Counts! by mentoring all CYS programs with activities which give youth the opportunity to get out there and spread some positive attitude and motivation to others.

Body piercing can be dangerous

Marcie Birk
Army Center for Health Promotion & Preventive Medicine

Israeli media report that a tongue piercing caused the September death of a young Israeli Soldier who developed a brain infection and then liver failure. While death is rare, piercing body parts can lead to allergic reactions, disfiguring scars and infections.

In the past 25 years, body piercing's popularity has increased dramatically as a fashion statement or a form a self-expression. The earlobe and upper-ear cartilage are commonly pierced sites. Other piercing sites include eyebrows, nose, lips, tongue and navel.

On Army installations or other places under Army control, U.S. Soldiers are subject to specific regulations regarding body piercing both on and off duty.

Army Regulation 670-1, 1-14c states, "Soldiers may not attach, affix, or display objects, articles, jewelry, or ornamentation to or through the skin. ..."

Female Soldiers may wear prescribed earrings while in uniform, but even ear piercing poses risks.

Infections are a common risk of body piercing. In various surveys, the rate of infection from earlobe piercing alone has been estimated at 11 to 24 percent. Along with infections and blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis B or C, individuals with oral-facial piercings can run the risk of prolonged bleeding, nerve damage and endocarditis, Mitchener said. (Endocarditis is a serious inflammation of heart tissues and valves.) Damage to teeth and gums also is common when wearing tongue piercings.

Despite the health risks, body piercing continues to be popular. Those who insist on body piercing should see a healthcare provider if any of the following occur —

- Redness or swelling that extends more than a quarter-inch from the piercing site.

- Soreness.
- Thick yellow or green discharge.
- Continuous oozing or bleeding.
- Warmth/heat at the piercing site.
- Red streaks coming from the piercing site.

If infection occurs, see a healthcare provider before removing the jewelry. When the jewelry is removed, a new body piercing closes very quickly — within hours or days — and may seal an infection in your body.

Risks of body piercing can be decreased but not eliminated. A piercing may only take a minute to get but could cause a lifetime of regret.

For more information contact one of the following organizations —

- Journal of the American Medical Association at Web site <http://jama.ama-assn.org>.
- Mayo Clinic, Piercing at Web site www.mayoclinic.com/health/piercing.
- Association of Professional Piercers at Web site www.safepiercing.org.

Antilles High School observes National Education Week

Jim Bryant
Antilles High School

Antilles High School, Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico celebrated American Education Week 2008-09 with a bang.

Students, teachers and parents rallied behind the theme for this year's celebration. Education — A Right and Responsibility.

The math department began the week with their activity, "Hands around the Pirate." Students calculated the arm span of how many students it would take to completely encircle the pirate on the gym floor. Students from other classes then lined up, the arm spans were determined and the number of students required was derived, a perfect calculation by our mathematicians.

Social Studies classes researched the balance between state and the federal governments. on education spending and even offered Inaugura-



Courtesy Photos

Sophomore Maribela Esteves shows off what National Education Week activities are all about.

tion words to Senator Barrack Obama's speech writers in the National Inauguration Writing conference. They also developed a trivia game to learn more about the AHS faculty. What a special team we have.

Parents were invited to visit classes throughout the week and share lunch with their child as well as interacting with the faculty at parent teacher conferences. Special kudos was sent to our military families as they celebrate their special month.

The week ended on a musical note when our musical department and other groups provided entertainment. People danced the night away at the annual Noche Puertorriqueña celebration.

Yes, Antilles High School truly saluted American Education week using bulletin boards, parent faculty student sharing, researching and a lot of fun and enthusiasm helped us realize just how lucky we are to have the right and the responsibility to our American education.



Antilles High School PTSA representative Lizzie Negrón was on hand to assist with the activities.

Building community resiliency at Army Installations

Anna F. Courie
Army Center for Health Promotion & Preventive Medicine

Soldiers and their family members at Army installations in the continental United States may benefit in future from a health and well-being initiative from the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.

The health and well-being of Soldiers and family members has been designated an integral aspect of the Army's mission by Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

Health and well-being include all aspects of mental, physical, spiritual and material wellness. CHPPM plays a crucial role in ensuring that these aspects of quality of life are addressed as a part of the garrison and tactical strategic plan. We often consider health to be solely the responsibility of medical personnel; however, when combining assets between medical, garrison and tactical personnel, we are better able to create a multidisciplinary effort that supports the health and resiliency of Army communities. CHPPM Health Promotion and Wellness Program staff members coordinate and facilitate this effort.

Health is an essential component of operational readiness—in the field and on the home-front. CHPPM's initiative addresses all aspects of Soldier and family member wellness. It incorporates processes into the way the installation does business to ensure a holistic and multidisciplinary effort.

Based on CHPPM Europe's health promotion and wellness model, Army regulation 600-63, Army Health Promotion, is executed through



the installation Health Promotion and Well Being Council, chaired by the installation commander and facilitated by a local health promotion coordinator.

Through data-driven tools, customer feedback assessments and a multidisciplinary forum, the council ensures the needs of the community are met. As a result, this process integrates tactical, medical and community assets towards the improvement of Soldier and family member well-being.

Now, at select CONUS installations, CHPPM is replicating this model. In CONUS, the health promotion program is partnering with community resiliency initiatives to actually score a community's level of wellness.

To facilitate action-oriented processes, the council implements working groups to focus on the needs identified for community wellness. Different working groups that have been implemented by HPWB councils include combat and operation stress control teams, suicide prevention task forces, fitness and weight management, youth wellness, deployment cycle support, and strategic planning.

The key to the function of the working groups is this umbrella of the HPWB council, which brings all subject-matter experts across all commands to the same table to prepare action plans that best meet the needs of the Army family. As a result, installation partnerships are built that enhance and strengthen the resiliency of these Army communities. Through strong communities, we are ensuring that the resources are in place for Strong Soldiers and Strong Families ready at any time to execute the Army mission.



Rodriguez Army Health Clinic sergeant promoted to 2nd Lieutenant

Marc McCormick
El Morro

One of the nicest things co-workers and commanders can witness is when one of their own succeeds. Rodriguez Army Health Clinic is proud of one of their Soldiers who put in all the hard work to accomplish his mission — to become an Army officer.

Carlos Molina, 35, formerly known as Sgt. Molina, is now a 2nd lieutenant in the Army after having completed the Army Enlisted to Officer Program.

"It's the Army Enlisted Commission program. It is a great program because it gives the opportunity for Soldiers to go to school and get an education (in nursing for Molina) and get a commission," Molina said.

Molina went to college to obtain a Bachelor in Science in Nursing. "It took 24 months; the Army gives you 24 months to finish the degree," he said.

I asked him how he got in the program.

"How do you get in the program? It is a competition basis and you have to compete with other Soldiers. Basically, you have to be active duty for three years and you have to compete with other Soldiers (comparing such things as) with awards and education. This is my second degree. I have a Bachelor Degree in Biology and Bachelor's of Science in Nursing."

The process is geared around success with benchmarks centered on grades and courses taken.

"They pay you to go to school. Your duty is to go to school and be sure you get good grades, because that's



Photos Marc McCormick

Col. (Ret.) Margarita Aponte, a former commander of Rodriguez Army Health Clinic, administers the Officer Oath of Enlistment to Jose Molina during a ceremony at RAHC Fort Buchanan Nov. 20, 2008.

what you get paid to do," he said. "I went to school at Inter-American University here in Puerto Rico. They have a program specifically in English for this."

After academic success — "Once you get registered with the National License for Nurses, then you get commissioned," he said. "And, once you get your commission, you go the Officer Basic Course and then for an internship of one year to the Army Medical Center the Army decides you will attend. In my case, I'm going to Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Ga. From there, I will go where the Army really needs me."

Molina's family also has a stake in his education. They have supported him since day one.

"I am a single dad with a nine year old girl, Karla. She's very excited about this. While I was in school she had to stay with grandpa while I was out. The commission is not only for me but for my family who gave me the support."

Being a professional and a Soldier, Molina will not stop with his professional education.

"I'm going to start my Master's in anesthesiology. It is something I am looking forward to. It's a big challenge. It's a difficult Master's Degree."

The Army has gained a valuable officer and the Medical Corps has gained a talented professional who will make a difference in Soldier's lives.

That's an accomplishment worth saluting.



Following the swearing in ceremony commissioning 2nd Lt. Carlos Molina, officiating officer Col. Margarita Aponte gives him an official Army Officers Guide.



A family affair — gathered together following his promotion ceremony, the Molina family pride clearly shows. The family attending were Carlos R. Molina, father; Jaissy E. Molina, sister; mother Rosa A. Molina; Ana Rodriguez, friend; daughter Karla and Karla's grandfather. Col. (Ret.) Margarita Aponte administered the oath of office.



Photos Marc McCormick

Ricardo Coloma-Ayala plays his cuatro while his father, César, accompanies him on the guitar. Ayala performed for students of Antilles High School recently.

A special gift from a special man

Melissa Zayas
El Morro Contributor

Ricardo C. Coloma Ayala, who played various songs for students of Antilles High School, goes beyond Puerto Rico borders to demonstrate his abilities as a musician of the Puerto Rican "cuatro," a four stringed guitar. In spite of his Down Syndrome, Coloma has obtained a number of achievements and goals during his 24 years.

"My son is thankful and he understands his condition and is proud of his goals and achievements," father César Coloma said.

Coloma, who travels every day with his father from Guayama, has a special curriculum studying in a special music program at Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, Metropolitan Campus Department of Popular Music with his father César Coloma.

Not only has Coloma travelled to many cities displaying his wonderful musician abilities with the "cuatro," but he has also a compact disc with his productions. His first production is called "Solo."

"Ricardo will complete the music program at the Interamerican University in one and a half years. The University will grant him with the title of functional musician. "It is very important that parents know that universities can modify their curriculums," César Coloma said.

Ricardo has overcome many obstacles, which makes him an bright example of achievement. He learned to read musical notes with colors, a technic applied by the traditional fundamentals of the Suzuki Method. Through that technique, Coloma read and memorized the songs.

Ricardo is also a sports lover and a painter. He represented Puerto Rico in the Special Olympics in 2003, held in Dublin, Ireland. During his visit to Ireland, his parents took advantage of the occasion to take Coloma to the World Convention of Down Syndrome in Singapore. During the convention, Coloma had the chance to interpret various musical songs playing the cuatro.

Coloma has been a painter for three years and already has a collection of 18 paintings, which have been exhibited at the Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico.



Fort Buchanan Exceptional Family Member Program Manager Raymond Morales, left, arranged with Emilio Gándara, second right, Movimiento para el Alcance de Vida Independiente, Inter-American University, for Ricardo Coloma-Ayala to perform for Antilles High School students accompanied by his father César.



Veterans honored at two ceremonies in San Juan

Marc McCormick
El Morro

Fort Buchanan and the municipality of San Juan celebrated Veterans' Day with joint ceremonies November 13 and 14.

Hosted by the Puerto Rico Departamento de La Familia y La Comunidad, the first event was held at the San Juan Municipal Building. The event was an opportunity to recognize the Veteran of the Year — Luis A. Arroyo, president, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands Federation Chapter 0252 (the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association).

Fort Buchanan Commanding Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo addressed the crowd saying, "Whether in war or peace, Soldiers have passed through the ranks of the United States Army in service to their country and look back on that experience with a sense of pride. Veterans never seem to lose the deep seated pride that comes from serving our great nation. Veterans represent all of you who have served in all our nation's conflicts. They symbolize the total dedication, the bravery, the toils and sacrifices that so many men and women have undergone to defend our principles of democracy and freedom."



Fort Buchanan Sergeant Major David Davis and guests look on as San Juan Mayor shows off his MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) that was presented to him by guest speaker Jaime Domenech at a veterans recognition ceremony held at American Legion Post 113 in Bayamón, Puerto Rico. MREs are standard fare for service-members on deployment.



San Juan Mayor Jorge Santini-Padilla was the guest speaker for the event. The mayor presented Arroyo with the recognition award as the Veteran of the year following his comments about the significance of veterans to Puerto Rico.

Following his speech, Mayor Santini and Col. Domingo displayed a recently signed Army Community Covenant between the municipality and the garrison which underscores the importance of supporting all Soldiers and veterans.

The Antilles High School Chorus provided the anthems for the United States and Puerto Rico in addition to entertaining the audience following the official ceremonies. The Color Guard of the 65th Infantry Regiment performed the honors of opening and closing the ceremony with the posting of the colors.

The following day the Departamento de La Familia y La Comunidad hosted another veterans recognition with a ceremony at American Legion Post 113 in Bayamón. The event featured guest speaker Jaime Domenech. Domenech was a prisoner of war during the Korean Conflict. In his presentation, he described his three year ordeal and what it was like to be a Soldier during that time and a Puerto Rican serving in the conflict. Domenech returned from Korea and worked in the Judge Advocate Corps and retired from active duty. He is still highly regarded for his service and patriotism by all islanders and is considered a hero of Puerto Rico and is a shining example of Puerto Rican veterans.

Mayor Santini also attended this event and spoke glowingly of the contributions men such as Domenech made in service to the country and Puerto Rico. Following his remarks, Domenech presented Santini with an MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) — the newest version of what were known as C & K Rations.

Col. Edwin C. Domingo also addressed the assembly reinforcing his remarks from the prior event saying, "Veterans have handed us the precious gift of freedom. Today, we remember the sacrifices made by the men and women in the armed forces who have served a great cause. These men and women follow a great tradition, handed down from generation to generation, especially in the beautiful



(Above) Jaime Domenech was the featured speaker at American Legion Post 113's veteran appreciation ceremony November 13. Domenech was held as a prisoner of war for three years during the Korean Conflict. He spoke about his experiences during a veterans appreciation day activity in Bayamón, Puerto Rico.

(Left, top) Members of the Antilles High School Chorus, led by music teacher Sonia Bettencourt and pictured with San Juan Mayor Jorge Santini-Padilla, performed the American and Puerto Rican anthems for the veterans appreciation ceremony held at San Juan's Municipal Building.

(Left, bottom) Cadets of the Air Force ROTC Detachment 755, University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus, performed a silent ceremony of respect for all fallen servicemembers from America's conflicts.



Photos by Marc McCormick

Fort Buchanan Commanding Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo and San Juan Mayor Jorge Santini-Padilla hold up an Army Community Covenant that symbolizes the commitment by the municipality to Soldiers and veterans during a ceremony held at the San Juan Municipal Center which recognized the Puerto Rican Veteran of the Year.

ful island of Puerto Rico, where, even dating back to the Spanish conquest, any family we meet will proudly boast of having at least one military member among them."

Members of Air Force ROTC Detachment 755, University of Puerto Rico Piedras Campus, performed a silent ceremony indicating the respect and tradition of the empty chair and table at the ceremony. It is a tradition which explains the missing Servicemembers who have made the ultimate sacrifice throughout our country's history. A narrator explained the symbolism of each object at the table. A bugler, from Fort Buchanan's Honor detail, played taps at the end. The Buchanan Honor Detail provides the solemn escort of fallen Soldiers who are returned to Puerto Rico and the Caribbean for internment.



Col. Edwin C. Domingo, commanding officer, Fort Buchanan, thanked veterans for their service to the country and Puerto Rico describing them as true heroes.

Col. Margarita Aponte retires from Army

The Nov. 7, 2008 ceremony marks the end of a remarkable 30-year career of service and dedication to the nation, Soldiers and Puerto Rico.

Marc McCormick
El Morro

Family, friends and professional colleagues in the Army and Puerto Rican community gathered together to honor one of the island's and garrison's most esteemed members, Col. Margarita Aponte.

She has finished a phase of her life marked by 30 years of military service recognised by everyone as a model of professionalism, moral character and service of excellence.

The guest speaker for the event, Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, director, Tricare Management Activity, spoke volumes when he said, "We are here to honor what I call a servant; and the greatest among you shall be called servants."

"If you look at Margarita Aponte, her entire great career she has truly been a servant. From the time she walked through the doors of university in Puerto Rico until the time she decided to work at the local hospital for a couple of years, then, all of a sudden, she must have heard that commercial — "Be All You Can Be. In 1978 she decided to head to Texas to officer basic and join the Army Nurse Corps," he said.

In keeping with the occasion, Elder went on to say, "This is an important day. I want to give you greetings from the 135,000 men and women of the military health care system who are dedicated to supporting the 2.6 million who are defending our nation and this Commonwealth from oppression and support our nation's mission and desires to elect a government for the people and by the people."



The Puerto Rico legislature presented a proclamation to Aponte. It was presented by Miriam Ramirez.



A representative of the Coamo's mayor's office presented Aponte with a recognition of the city as being one of their outstanding city daughters.

Then, reflecting on Aponte's career he said, "When you look at her bio, it is an unbelievable bio. Going anywhere from Fort Hood, to Fort Lee to Germany; Operations Desert Shield Desert Storm, serving in the Sinai, becoming a expert in critical care nursing with burn patients, and more."

"It is the bio of a servant," he added. "She said, that's not enough. I'm heading back to my hometown, my island and come to the Army clinic — Rodriguez Health Clinic. She didn't just come to be the clinic commander. She had ulterior motives. She came her to save the clinic."

"This is the kind of servant we are honoring today. It's that kind of compassion that our Army has asked for all of us who wear the uniform. To say, "look, give me a blank check," he said.

"When you join the military you sign a blank check and she signed a blank check. And that blank check states this, 'I want to serve anywhere in the world up to the point of giving or paying the ultimate sacrifice. That's my life.' And she has done that along with many many others from the Commonwealth in support of our nation."

"So we are recognizing a servant," he said.

"But, she didn't stop there. She said, "General Granger, I'm going to retire and I want to stay in the Commonwealth. Do you have a job for me? I said to her, "You know I've got a job for you. I want you to take Tricare to the next level as what I call being a deployment forward Tricare Representative on the island. She, along with our staff, worked magnificently," he said.

Col. Edwin C. Domingo, commanding officer, Fort Buchanan, in his remarks said, "It is an honor and a privilege for me to be part of this significant retirement ceremony. It is not an easy task trying to recall the exceptionally meritorious performance of 30 years of outstanding service of the exemplary Soldier we honor today, Dra. (Col.) Margarita Aponte, considered by many as an extraordinary example of service for military and civilians."

"A jibarita raised by her grandmother Doña Monserrate Alicea, better known as Doña Monse, en el Barrio Hayaes de Coamo, Col. Aponte never imagined how far her footsteps would take her. Like Florence Nightingale, she pledged to practice her profession faithfully, with loyalty and devotion to aid the physician in his work and committed to the welfare



Friends and colleagues, Aponte shares a moment before the retirement ceremony with Col. Nancy Gilmore-Lee, Deputy Commander for Nursing, Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center.



Photos Leo Martinez

Col. Aponte received the Legion of Merit from Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, director, Tricare Management Activity.

of her patients. The Hippocratic Oath, like our Constitution and our Army mission became alive in every decision she made and every action she has taken in her long and productive career," he said.

"The practice of nursing is a privilege which carries important responsibilities. All nurses should observe the core values of the profession centered on the duty to help others. That was Colonel Aponte's main concern — to do everything in her power to provide Soldiers, family members and veterans the best care; all within the context of honesty, respect and compassion. A nurse is always facing fear, danger, or adversity, either physical or moral."

"It takes more than personal courage to be loyal to your oath, to serve and save lives, to fulfill your obligations above and beyond the call of duty; and to respect and be respected by others based on your own merits — being a generous, honest and incredible human being," Domingo said.

Addressing her friends, admirers and family, Aponte spoke from her heart as she reflected on her 30 years service.

"Even though I have traveled all around the world, I am still Puerto Rican and I am still here with all of you."

"It is an honor to be here with you one more time. Thank you for giving me the honor to serve you in the United States Army for 30 years. It is not easy to say farewell to an institution that has given me so many opportunities," she said.

"I would like to thank my husband, Antonio, for being my friend, my support, my support for 30 years because I met him when I go to Fort Hood, Texas," she said.

"Even though she is not here today, my grandmother Monserrate Alicea raised me in the barrio Hayaes, Coamo and she instilled the values I have today. Even though we were poor, here I am today, I made it through the ranks," she said.

"To my family from Rodriguez Clinic, thank you for being there for me when I needed you. To Miriam Ramirez and General Santoni, I thank you for your unconditional support on behalf of our Fort Buchanan community," she said.

"It has been a tremendous honor to serve alongside you. I have been blessed with the opportunity of serving with a super team of military and civilian personnel. I will always treasure that experience," she said.

The Aponte Family



Photos by Leo Martinez

Family members attending the retirement were — (left to right) Amarilys Alicea, sister-in-law; Juan A. Aponte, brother; Col. Aponte; Rebeca M. Martinez, daughter; Emil A. Martinez, son; Jose A. Martinez, husband; Maria del Lourdes Aponte, sister and Luis A. Alejandro, cousin.



ROTJ Cadet, future Army enlistee and son, Emil, presents his mother with her Certificate of Retirement.



With Maj. Gen. Elder Granger (left) and husband José (right) looking on, Aponte's brother Juan presents Col. Aponte with a Certificate of Appreciation for service in the Armed Forces.



Husband José Martinez, himself a retired lieutenant colonel, presents his wife with her retirement flag.



Daughter Rebecca also took part in the ceremony presenting her father, José, with a spouse's Certification of Appreciation in recognition of his 30 year support of Col. Aponte's career.



Marines obtain uncertain win in first Annual Turkey Bowl

In the first Fort Buchanan Turkey Bowl, the Army team most probably lost to the Marine Corps team 52-28. Officiating and the wind play their part in the outcome.

Marc McCormick
El Morro

November 26 was the first Annual Fort Buchanan Turkey Bowl played at the garrison's Maxie Williams Field in front of - lots of people. From the start of the contest, it was apparent the game would be hotly contested.

Referee Raymond Johnson, even though he patiently explained the rules prior to kickoff, was well pressed in keeping order at times while being heckled from the sidelines. Overall, he provided a Solomnic game although he should have maintained scoring to compare to the official "scoreboard."

As inferred, the Marines were handy at scoring but it was a matter of exactly how much. The provided "scoreboard," or should we say, score stand, was constantly being reset during the first half of the game because the wind was turning the ribbon numbers or by people who ambled by a got the "right" score posted. The final score could just as well have been 300 to 0.

However, in the spirit of good sportsmanship, the Army accepted the Marine Corps win. You pick your final.

The Army made a good game of it, but it would be fair to say the Marines fielded a better athletic team. I do not believe age of the players had anything to do with the outcome.

Accepting the win, the Marine Corps was awarded the Turkey Bowl trophy by Fort Buchanan Commanding

Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo, with some score to be imprinted later. I am sure the Army will ask for it back next year when the score will reflect a different outcome. So while it is in their possession, we ask that the Marines keep it polished and pristine.

Following the game, which was sponsored by the Fort Buchanan BOSS Program, the athletes and spectators were invited a barbeque of spareribs, chicken, corn, roasted turkey and soft drinks. Clashes on the field were forgotten in the camaraderie of the noontime bash.

Heard at one point following the game was vague muttering, emanating from the proximity of the Army, about "suspending exchange privileges," or something of that nature. However, the command sergeant major did have a reflection on the game saying, "On behalf of the Fort Buchanan Garrison Commander and to all who coordinated, supported, and participated in the inaugural Army vs. Marine Turkey Bowl - thank you! The game was a great success and the esprit de corps was equally impressive, despite the Marines "controversial," yet impressive 52-28 win."

As sportswriter Grantland Rice, the great Tennessean and American said -

"For when the One Great Scorer comes

To write against your name,

He marks - not that you won or lost -

But how you played the Game."

(from the poem "Alumnus Football")



Photos Marc McCormick

(Above) The Marine Corps team shows off the trophy they won by defeating Army 58-22 in the 1st Annual Turkey Bowl played on Fort Buchanan's Maxie Williams Field Nov. 26, 2008. The 4-quarter game was followed by a community barbeque. The game and barbeque were hosted by the garrison BOSS Program.



(Left) Fort Buchanan Commanding Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo tossed the coin for the 1st Annual Turkey Bowl at the garrison. Army won the toss and elected to kick-off to the Marines. Referee Raymond Johnson eyes the score and trophy following the game contemplating whether or not to throw a flag over the scoring.



The Army team hung tough in the face of several obstacles accepting the loss with good sportsmanship.



Marc McCormick

Wrapping up the Christmas season at Fort Buchanan...

(Left) Toys for Tots began in 1947 when Major Bill Hendricks, USMCR and a group of Marine Reservists in Los Angeles collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children and it continues to this day. In an effort to raise money for the foundation, Marine Corps Reservists manned a table in the foyer of the Exchange offering gift wrapping in exchange for donations. Also, the wrapping initiative was picked up by the new BOSS program at the garrison. The next day, after the marines, Spc. Tiffany Roman and Magda Rivera, Office Administrator for the garrison commander, took the day shift offering to wrap presents purchased by Exchange patrons. The money donated for their efforts goes in support of the BOSS program - a program which assists single Soldiers with activities and support year round.



USPS targets holiday mailing deadline for overseas addresses

Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — As the holidays approach and military families start thinking about what they're going to send loved ones serving overseas, there are a few dates to keep in mind.

"The earliest deadline is for troops that are serving in the Iraq [and] Afghanistan area," said Al DeSarro, spokesman for the western region of the U.S. Postal Service.

"You want to send all your holiday mail and packages [to those areas] by Dec. 4."

Holiday mail, including packages and cards, going to military bases in other parts of the world should be shipped by Dec. 11, he said.

"We do encourage people to closely follow these deadlines," DeSarro said. "Of course, we make every attempt, even if you miss the deadline, to deliver the mail to our troops."

Pseudo-Santas who can't beat those dates have another option to get holiday goodies to their destinations in time: Express Mail.

But it will cost a bit more and it's not available for servicemembers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Priority Mail Flat-Rate boxes are the best value when shipping to military members serving at home or anywhere overseas, DeSarro said.

The largest flat-rate box costs \$10.95 to ship to an APO or FPO address. That's a \$2 discount, and the boxes are free.

The flat-rate boxes come with another bonus.

If it will fit in the box, and weighs 70 pounds or less, it ships at the established rate.

"We also offer a special military package kit, ...and this applies even if you want to send to our troops here in the U.S.," DeSarro said. "If you call ...1-800-610-8734, they'll send you a free kit of packaging materials. Priority mail boxes, tape, labels and stuff that can make your holiday packing much easier."

When shipping any holiday package, there are some basic guidelines to take into consideration, he added.

If a USPS-provided box isn't being used, senders should make sure the box they're using is sturdy.

Don't use wrapping paper or string on the outside, and print both the shipping and return addresses clearly.

Contents should be packaged securely and in leak-proof containers, and consider the customs of the country to ensure the items are appropriate and acceptable.

USPS also suggests including the mailing address, return address and the contents of the box on a slip of paper with the other contents, just in case something out of the ordinary should happen.

Following not only the shipping date guidelines, but also the general packing guidelines can help the USPS get packages where they're going during their busiest time of the year.

DeSarro urges people to mail as much as they want and as early as they can, noting that officials expect 20 million pounds of mail will be sent U.S. troops this holiday season.



Terri Helus
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

FORT RUCKER, Ala. — With the launch of the Peer to Peer Video Competition, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center hopes to harness the power of peer influence to help prevent accidents and save lives.

The competition tagline, "Make a movie — save a life," challenges Soldiers to personalize safety messaging by creating short videos which promote off-duty safety awareness. The goal is to have Soldiers create safety messages that speak directly to their peers.

Entrants post their video on any social networking site and send a link to USACRC to submit their video for consideration. Videos should effectively convey ways to safely conduct off-duty activities and a humorous slant is encouraged.

"So much of what we accomplish in safety is

considered boring by most," said USACRC Command Sergeant Major, Tod Glidewell. "Today's Soldier is tech savvy and digital communication literate. Peer to Peer allows Soldiers to use their creativity to communicate safety information the way they want to hear it."

Peer to Peer puts safety into the hands of Soldiers and provides a venue to share tips, lessons learned and best practices. Most Soldiers have a favorite "There I was..." story and the video medium will allow them to share the benefit of their experience with an Army-wide audience.

"The battle buddy mindset has kept many a Soldier from harm," said Dr. Patricia Le Duc, director, Human Factors Task Force. "This competition capitalizes on the power of peer influence, and extends its reach exponentially through the Web."

The contest runs through March 31, 2009, and is open to all military ID card holders including Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers. Visit Web site <https://cra.army.mil/videocompetition/> for promotional materials, official rules and a sample peer safety video.



New rules passed for saluting flag

El Morro Staff

Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect this month.

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces,"

said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

The new provision improves upon a little known change in federal law last year that authorized veterans to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, but it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year's provision also applied to members of the armed forces while not in uniform.

Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's official head-gear. The most recent change, authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was sponsored by Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed on October 14. The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect Jan. 28, 2008.

Beware of holiday loan traps — learn tips from Army Community Services

Pamela Flemions
Ft. Stewart ACS

In the mist of these tough economic times, you may consider the offer to skip a loan payment, credit card payment, or holiday loan as an early Christmas gift. Well think again. These offers result in more interest paid by you in the long run. When a payment is skipped and not paid toward the principle, you end up with a higher balance as the accrued interest compounds on the previous outstanding balance. For example, if you have a \$5,000 credit card balance at 18 percent interest, skipping your monthly payment of \$125 will result in additional interest of \$75 and extend the payback one month. Now

consider the cost of a car payment, which is a depreciating asset. To compute the true cost of skipping credit card and loan payments, use the calculators at Web site www.bankrate.com. Avoid holiday loans through finance companies and online Internet military loans that often carry high interest rates. Holiday loans may also be marketed by tax preparation firms in December and require only a paystub. The annual percentage rates can range from 36 percent to 768 percent for a two-week loan. What can you do to stretch your already-tight funds? In the Army world, the Post Exchange is one of the best options, averaging a 20 percent savings in addition to tax-free purchases. If you must use credit, avoid high-interest retail stores. For more information or to speak with a financial educator, call Army Community Services at 707 -3310.



Mediation, Conflict Resolution — a new tool in today's Soldier toolkit

Capt. Patrick K. Vazquez
402nd CAB

After the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, new tactical and technical skills have been introduced into the U.S. Armed Forces in order to meet the demands of a non-structured, decentralized, non-shaped battlefield.

These unconventional activities have to be addressed using new unconventional tools that will give us an edge over our enemies without losing focus that U.S. Soldiers should represent and defend our most precious gift — democracy.

In order to meet all the day-to-day demands on the battlefield while protecting the human rights of all citizens, Soldiers need to utilize a vast set of new tools that are also new in our daily vocabulary.

Civil Affairs Specialists are the middle man between the local community, tribe or government, and the mission of the U.S. commander on the ground.

CA Soldiers have skills not found in normal tactical units, because of the nature of the job.

CA Soldiers are skilled in socio-economics, religious and cultural awareness in their area of operations.

They are fluent in the local language or have translators to assist in their mission and are advisors to the ground commanders in aspects already mentioned such as supporting the best course of action, integrating local civilians and ground operations and winning their hearts and minds by empowering civilians and local agencies, gaining support of their own people.

To accomplish missions involving both war fighting and peace building, Soldiers must utilize a wide spectrum of responses, ranging from situational awareness and aggressive war fighting to what may be experienced as the antithetical competencies of mediation and cross-cultural negotiation.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution is a skill whereby Soldiers empower local people with the ability to seek mutual solutions to their problems on their own terms.

This democratic tool will serve our Soldiers during normal tribal conflicts, family disputes and non-criminal litigations, allowing our Soldiers to show a more human side and gaining the trust and confidence of the tribal leaders.

"Conflict avoidance is not conflict resolution." — John Burton

Current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan involving counterinsurgency, peace-keeping stability and nation building have increased interest in cross-cultural negotiation and mediation skills as a central competency of military leadership.

The development of cross-cultural knowledge and skills takes time and should not be left to pre-deployment training.

Some skills were identified as relevant across echelons, whereas others were identified as more relevant for mid-to-senior-level leaders.

Developing these more advanced competencies, such as negotiation and mediation skills and the ability to anticipate second and third order effects of operations, will require some foundational skills, such as basic interpersonal skills and cultural knowledge.

Rotation after rotation has taught the CA community the need to assist civilians

in minor conflicts and leading the way to find a common denominator, mutual solution that they can embrace and accept because they were part of the decision process.

This process of mediation is not a common practice in most cultures in the Middle East or Afghanistan.

However, the benefits of the process can impact not only the parties involved in the process but third parties (Commander and allies) who need to conduct missions in their Area of Operations.

The difficult part is to educate civilian or tribal leaders on the benefits of empowering others to find solutions.

One way to overcome barriers that result from the perception of difference is to find elements of shared identity.

The ability to look past gender, racial, or cultural differences and find common ground contributes to collaboration and teamwork as well as positive inter-group relations more generally.

Where similarities may not already exist, new shared patterns can be established.

Leaders and Soldiers must be proficient in core war fighting competencies, but also mentally agile and trained enough to adapt those competencies across the spectrum of conflict.

They must be agile enough to readily seize fleeting opportunities.

Their competencies must expand from war fighting to competencies that support stability operations, including language skills, cross-cultural communication, enabling economic development and governance, and conflict resolution through negotiation and mediation.

They must be able to use their knowledge of culture and language to enable operations and leverage the instruments of national power to achieve objectives.

These skills don't come naturally for a Soldier, in fact they are completely opposite of what is expected from a more traditional combat warrior.

In nature, a Soldier is a leader, a strong supporter of the decision-making-process, using arbitrator type of leadership, a quick thinker and calm during high stress environments.

While a mediator helps both parties to find solutions that are of mutual benefit, Soldiers by nature would suggest solutions or impose rules.

However, Civil Affairs Soldiers are benefiting from these skills because of the impact they can make when dealing with others in the workplace, during community meetings and civilian disputes during their cycle or overseas rotation.

Most of our CA teams are interacting with community leaders, litigating territorial disputes, negotiating civil-military procedures, so the commander can accomplish his intent or mission.

When embraced by both parties, mediation serves as a tool of empowerment, fairness and sends a message of commitment; however, some precautions should be taken during the process.

Distracting elements can influence the effectiveness of the process, some of these are — uniforms, weapons on hand, security provided, translators, age/maturity and cultural/historical issues just to mention a few.

Intimidation can occur if the parties involved see the mediator as a combatant and not as an unbiased peace mediator.

The use of weapons, security guards,

vehicles or even the use of the military command voice can affect the mediation process.

Soldiers will need to modify these distracters if they want to have a positive influence and obtain resolutions.

Translators should also have the same training as mediators.

If not, the message will not be understood with the same connotation, effectiveness or meaning as intended.

Finally, some cultures believe that the older you are, the more litigation, wisdom, influence and decision power you have, so they will not speak, deal or negotiate with you if they feel a lack or maturity on your part.

One way for CA operators to facilitate a bias-free environment, with few to no distracters, is to conduct these sessions in the Civil Military Operations Center.

The CMOC offers both parties an unbiased, secured, middle ground, where all parties involved can speak and reach an agreement, although, this can be considered an interest-based mediation.

The attendees should be there voluntarily; be offered a neutral environment and ensured confidentiality and enforceability if an agreement is reached at the end of the session.

The art of mediation and conflict resolution is new in the ranks, although has been used in the civilian sector for benefit of military dependents and the civilian military workforce.

CA operators using these tools means more than just an alternative dispute resolution form.

It means a way to gain civilians hearts, minds, trust, and cooperation.

It allows a way to develop rapport, credibility and gives disputants the ability to seek and use same procedures in the future to obtain same beneficial results.

To address the challenge of developing impartial agreements that emphasize community rather than sectarian interests, a military negotiation instructional program would need to emphasize the development of effective mediation skills.

The program could provide a review of specific challenges associated with different phases of mediation processes and teach officers the skills to address these challenges.

Officers must also learn to apply forceful, proactive mediation techniques in the face of intense and hostile conflicts and a more relaxed, facilitative role when dealing with less intense disputes.

This dual-hat role will allow Soldiers the ability to meet their goals implementing mediation as an ADR facilitation in any given circumstance; hostile environment or peaceful situation as we remember the main role of a Soldier and how Soldiers must adapt to the environment as well as the mediation process adapts to the Soldier.

We must acknowledge that the role of our Soldiers is not limited to the battle



Army Photo

Army Civil Affairs Soldiers work with indigenous people and leaders to stabilize areas in Army areas of operations. CAB units are looking for Soldiers who want to work with deployed CAB units.

space but also committed to family members, civilian join-organizations, as well as military bases and their employees.

With this said, the skills of mediation will provide a fair and reliable ADR system in which military officers, key leaders, equal opportunity officers, chaplains and others, can help assist small disputes and help in the resolution process, avoiding the long-term, high cost litigation process.

Currently, every major post or base has an active mediation and conflict resolution assistance program under the Equal Employment Opportunity directorate.

Perhaps these leaders should be the spearhead, introducing this concept in key leadership courses.

Another solution is to contract independent professional mediators that meet a set of standards or credentials that also need to be identified and have these individuals assist and mentor our civil affairs operators.

Editor's Note — Capt. Vazquez is a Civil Affairs Officer assigned to the 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion, Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. For more information about Civil Affairs activities and professional development, call 787-707-3823.

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DeCA gets high marks in DoD for customer service, employer of choice

Cherie Huntington
DeCA Public Affairs

FORT LEE, Va. — DeCA's latest employee satisfaction survey reveals that not only did the agency improve in every category, it set a new Department of Defense benchmark score in customer orientation.

The Organizational Assessment Survey, an elective survey administered by the Office of Personnel Management, helps "take the temperature" of the workforce and its culture. The survey was made available to DeCA employees worldwide, from January through March, achieving a 32 percent return rate with 5,704 respondents.

"OPM reported that our improvements were unprecedented," said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA's director and chief executive officer. "They thought there had to be some kind of mistake, so they reconfirmed the findings. We averaged seven percentage points of improvement in every category, across the board. That tells me we're headed in the right direction to keeping DeCA the employer of choice as well as leading the way in superior customer service." The agency first conducted the survey in 2005 to establish a baseline for development and improvement, according to Karen Wells, human

relations project officer for the survey.

"The first survey helped show us things to hone in on," Wells said. "It highlighted areas for managers to take a hard look at, and items to add to the inspector general checklist. Each category was reviewed so improvements could be considered and implemented. Now the current survey enables us to make continuous improvements based on employee feedback."

Wells said the 10-point improvement in the training and career development score proved most impressive, especially with that area undergoing even more dramatic changes in the year ahead. Areas achieving top five scores were —

- Customer orientation — 68 percent (up from 62 percent).
- Diversity 62 percent (up from 55 percent).
- Work environment 59 percent (up from 54 percent).
- Teamwork 59 percent (up from 51 percent).
- Performance measures 56 percent (up from 49 percent).

Wells said full results should be available to process owners by January. The next survey will take place in about two years.



Upgraded software gets Soldiers speaking faster



El Morro Staff

Newport News, VA — Soldiers and civilian personnel now have access to language training designed to get them speaking another language even faster. The latest version of the foreign language software uses technology to create an environment of complete immersion in the studied language. The Army e-Learning initiative has delivered language training to over 180,000 uniformed and civilian Army personnel.

Units preparing to deploy across the globe are using Army e-Learning for pre-deployment training, including foreign-language instruction. Courses in Arabic, Farsi and Pashto are not only making measurable differences in basic communication skills, but may also help Soldiers achieve their missions related to the Global War on Terror.

More than 1/3 of the personnel are studying Arabic, which is one of the numerous mission-critical languages offered through Army e-Learning, a component of the U.S. Army Distributed Learning System. Now available in twenty one languages, the latest version of the language training software features state-of-the-art speech recognition technology and guided pronunciation exercises and simulated dialogues that build confidence and perfect pronunciation. It is designed to provide soldiers the fundamental language skills needed to communicate upon deployment.

"Foreign language training provides our Soldiers, leaders, and Army civilians on-line courses geared towards building their proficiency in another language as quickly as possible," says Lt. Col. Antonio Boston, Product Manager for DLS. "Language skills, especially speaking and listening skills, are critical. The new upgrades to the software focuses heavily on building those key skills quickly, making it an ideal solution for our needs."

Stan Davis, Deputy Product Manager for DLS and Project Officer for Army e-Learning adds, "We are proud to provide free, state-of-the-art solution for our troops. With this latest upgrade, Soldiers will get to develop their conversational skills, as they use new technologies and practice producing new phrases that will help them as they carry out their operational duties abroad."

The U.S. Army Distributed Learning System acquires, deploys and maintains a worldwide learning infrastructure that innovatively combines hardware, software and telecommunications resources with training facilities and course content to deliver a cohesive, Web based solution. DLS is part of the U.S. Army Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems. PEO EIS is responsible for project management of Department of Defense and Army business and combat service support systems, as well as related Army communication and computer infrastructure. Army e-Learning, a component of DLS, contributes more than 2,600 training courses in the areas of foreign languages, information technology, business, leadership and professional development.



Department of the Army Federal Health Benefits Program



El Morro Staff

The 2009 **APF Federal Benefits Open Season** will be held from Nov. 10, 2008, through Dec. 8, 2008.

The 2008 **NAF Federal Benefits Open Season** will be held from Nov. 3, 2008, through Nov. 28, 2008 (passed changes only can be done).

This is a great opportunity to speak with your health carrier representatives of any doubts, concerns or questions you may have. If you are considering making changes to your FEHB carrier, we encourage you to visit Web site www.abc.army.mil or call 1-877-276-9287.

Official Enrollment Web site for the **Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program** — During Open Season is your only opportunity to enroll, cancel or change your FEDVIP enrollment effective Jan. 1, 2009, by logging in to Web site www.BENEFEDS.com.

Once logged in, you can register by creating your User ID and password. Those who are enrolled, view your 2009 dental and/or vision enrollment details, cancel coverage, change carriers, change enrollment types, or add/remove family members.

You cannot change or cancel your enrollment outside of Open Season just because you can no longer afford premiums or just because you retire or change your mind.

If you are considering making changes to your FEDVIP enrollment (such as a change in plans or enrollment type), we encourage you to visit Web site www.BENEFEDS.com before Open Season to retrieve your BENEFEDS password using your User ID, noted above.

For general questions, please visit the Help section at Web site www.BENEFEDS.com. If you have specific questions about your enrollment, email us at Service@BENEFEDS.com.

You may also call our Customer Service Center at 1-877-888-FEDS (1-877-888-3337) (TTY 1-877-889-5680) Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern time.



IMCOM Safety Gram

Sustaining, Supporting, and Defending Safety Excellence

09-04 14 November 2008

Get Kid Smart!

Accidents, not disease or illness, are the main cause of death in children under 14. Car accidents are the most common, followed by drownings, fires and burns, falls, choking and poisoning. What better time of year than Thanksgiving to talk with your family about home safety?

A good way to check your home for hazards is to see it from the baby or child's point of view. Get down on your hands and knees and crawl around each room looking for sharp edges. Look for things that could fall or be pulled onto a child's head. Check for objects that are dangerous if chewed on or swallowed, like electrical cords or mouth-sized items on low tables. Look in cupboards for poisonous or sharp objects. Are there places where baby could get limbs or head caught, or falling hazards. Getting down to a child's level will help you spot things you wouldn't otherwise have noticed.

The following safety tips are a good start towards a safer home for kids:

- Never leave a baby unattended on a table or other high place, even if they seem secure at the time. Even tiny babies can wiggle and squirm their way into danger.
- Use approved, safety tested infant and child car seats, cribs, high chairs and playpens. Follow all manufacturer's instructions for their assembly and use. Be cautious of garage sale or hand-me-downs of these particular items. They may not be safe.
- Check all toys for small parts that can be swallowed and for sharp edges. Keep older children's toys away from babies. Immediately get rid of broken and deflated balloons because they pose a choking hazard.
- Once babies start crawling and walking, the danger of falls, and pulling furniture or other items down begins. Keep all heavy, sharp and breakable objects well out of reach and not on wobbly shelves or on furniture that may be bumped in play. Block off stairways with gates; these must also be safety approved.
- Cover sharp corners of tables and counters with corner cushions or foam. Tablecloths can be easily yanked on by even a small baby, with a resulting rain of dangerous objects.
- The kitchen can be an especially dangerous place for children. Burning, cutting, electrocution and falling are some of the hazards. Never leave a baby or small child alone in the kitchen. Don't hold baby or let her play on the floor near your feet while you are cooking. Keep pot handles turned inwards and out of reach. Don't leave boiling pots or frying pans unattended. Install a stove guard and knob covers on controls to prevent tampering. Keep all electrical gadgets unplugged when not in use, and keep them out of reach of children. Clean up spills right away.
- Don't leave full or half-full buckets of water around the house as this poses a drowning danger. Never leave a baby unattended in the bath. Keep the toilet bowl lid closed. There have been cases of babies drowning in toilet bowls.
- Turn down water heater temperature to prevent scalds and burns. Don't drink or carry hot liquids while holding a baby. Don't heat baby bottles in the microwave.
- Make sure your smoke detectors are working, have a fire extinguisher on hand and know how to use it. Have an escape plan ready and rehearsed in case of fire. Keep matches and batteries away from children.
- Be aware that some house plants are poisonous. Get rid of them or keep them out of reach. Babies may also eat the dirt or knock plants over.

It may seem you have more to worry about now than you ever imagined! However, by being aware of potential accidents, you'll be able to prevent them, and keep your child safe.

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



Buchanan employee creating excitement in music world

Melissa Zayas
El Morro Contributor

"I was born with the music inside because my mom and grandmother were pianists. I was the only black leave that likes and plays rock," Joaquín Pedrón said, who has been working in the Visual Information Branch of Fort Buchanan's DOIM since 2002.

Pedrón's new rock band Vox Elektra launched their new disk "Con la Televisión" consisting of 11 songs. This new Spanish rock band is led by vocalists Joaquín Pedrón and Gerardo Campos.

According to Pedrón, Vox Elektra's beginnings commenced when Luis Deya, who works at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, took Vox Elektra's demo disc to North Carolina and gave it to one of his Puerto Rican friends to play on his radio station.

Dominic Jackson from Adowa Records in Los Angeles, California, liked what he heard and contacted the performers. "Thanks to the Puerto Rican who played our songs at his radio station and Luis Deya, Dominic Jackson contacted Vox Elektra's crew and signed a contract with us on October 2007," Pedrón said.

They dedicated most time to the making of Con la Televisión staying awake until 2 or 3 a.m. in the morning recording their music. "We did all the recording and editing at Gerardo Campos's studio in Cupey," Pedrón said. Both Pedrón and Campos have been playing together in a band since 1987. Their first band was named Latin Force.

The first song, composed six years ago by Pedrón, was Con la Televisión. Thanks to this song it was how everything got started towards a recording contract.

"I would always keep a napkin with me and every time I thought of something I would write it down," Pedrón said. "I was trying to find a song that would be about partying because you can sing it out loud."

"Not many people know that I have a band. But soon people will know who is Vox Elektra because they would be reading this article," Pedrón said.

The debut for the disc is still in progress, but Alpha Rock has been promoting it to Spanish media. The recording of the disc took five months with lots of work and dedication. The lyrics were what Puerto Ricans would call — "sacado de la manga," (out of the sleeve, a phrase that means spontaneous inspiration). They focused on the moment to write the lyrics that talk about love, depression, among other feelings. Also, Pedrón said that the experience of doing this entire disc was incredible. He dedicated all his free time to making the disc hoping Vox Elektra would become a well-known Spanish rock band.

"My dream is to be able to live by the music. I don't want to be famous, I just want to live with what my music gives to me because it is my passion," Pedrón said. "I think I still have time to win a Grammy at the age of 90."

For more information about the band, you can log in to Web site www.myspace.com/vox-elektramusic.



Courtesy Photo

Joaquín Pedrón (right) and Gerardo Campos (left) play the feature song and name of their album, "Con la Televisión," during a television performance in San Juan.

Amazing adventures of Harry Hauck continue

Melissa Zayas
El Morro Contributor

Harry Hauck, professional scuba diver, long distance swimmer and former U.S. Navy Frogman, is living his 80 years of age to the fullest and continues his breakneck pace with the same enthusiasm of his earlier years.

Hauck, who is environmentalist and a NAUI Worldwide Dive Safety Through Education instructor, came to Puerto Rico 44 years ago when he was hired at the Caribe Hilton as a swimming coach. He was also the first Water Polo coach on the island. Hauck's dedication has received ample recognition especially for the clean-ups that he has done at public beaches and his support of noble causes. In 1992 he was named Citizen of the Year by the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board.

Hauck has a special interest for Puerto Rico's history. He demonstrated this interest when restoring an antique cannon found off the waters of San Juan and donated to Fort Buchanan.

"It was curious because one of the divers saw a pile of rocks that didn't belong to that area, under this pile of rocks was where we found the cannon," Hauck said. "At that time, they (mariners) placed the rocks at the bottom of wooden ships for ballast. When the ships sank the wood would deteriorate, so the only thing that would be left was the rocks."

The cannon might have been from one of the Earl of Cumberland's warships in 1598, when the British invaded the island near Santurce and held it for several months until an outbreak of the plague forced them to retreat. In 1988 Hauck also donated a Spanish anti-personnel cannon probably dating to 1775. It was found off the Dorado Coast in 1987 by him and the then existing Fort Buchanan Divers Team.

Then in 1982, at 54, Hauck became the first person to swim non-stop for 30 hours from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico. The purpose was to promote physical fitness for senior citizens. Having been bitten once by an eight foot shark, he decided to tackle this swim inside a cage, Hauck said.

One of Harry's biggest accomplishments was the English Channel Swim in 1986 at age 58. He, his wife Carol and four children successfully completed a relay swim across the English Channel to promote family values. Proudly representing Puerto Rico, the Hauck's were the first family to accomplish this, and were the only ones until 1993, when the Maroney family from Australia did so. No other family has repeated the feat to date. It took the Haucks 11 hours and 1 minute to swim from England to France.

Hauck also swam around the island of Puerto Rico in 1988 at age 60, as part of an anti-drug crusade co-sponsored by Hogares Crea and Fort Buchanan. The event took 36 days. He would swim each day to a different beach around the island. An anti drug rally was held at each of the beaches. He swam three major laps for 10 consecutive days each, with one-day rest stop in Mayaguez, Ponce and Roosevelt Roads.

In another feat, he swam for 24 consecutive hours at the Escambrón beach as part of an AIDS awareness campaign, remembered Hauck.

He has also contributed to the environment. He and his Fort Buchanan divers, together with other diving clubs, conducted dozens of beach clean ups around the island, where they would clean underwater trash. He received ample recognition for this from the NAUI underwater instructors association and environmental groups.

According to Hauck, marine life has changed a lot during the past 30 years, when he was serving in the Navy at Roosevelt Roads Naval Base and in Vieques. "There was more marine life, big fish, lobsters and now most are gone," he said.

Although many things have changed underwater, sharks are still on sight. Hauck has seen and been side-to-side with sharks. Twenty years ago, Hauck was bitten by a

See Hauck Next Page

Vicente Cabán — world traveler off to Antartica following retirement

Melissa Zayas
El Morro Contributor

Vicente Cabán, 62, a Social Studies teacher at Antilles High School, will retire at the end of this semester after 22 years in the system, to keep travelling around the world, but this time to the fifth largest continent, Antarctica.

"That's one of the few continents I haven't been to yet and my plans are to step on all seven of them. I think it is a different experience. I will be there for three or four weeks," Cabán said.

Although Cabán want to keeps travelling around the world, when he comes back from Antarctica, his plans are to study French to keep on with his learning and plan his next trip to Australia. "That is pretty much my future plans. I want to travel until I die, probably."

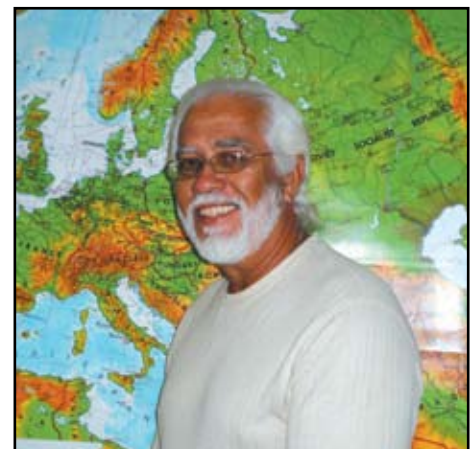
Cabán, who was born and raised in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, left his home at age 16 and dropped out of high school to live in New York City. Later, he moved to Ohio to finish high school and started college at Youngstown State University.

Although Cabán commenced college at Youngstown, he also dropped out to live for a while in Europe. When he came back he finished his bachelor and master's degrees. "I went to Europe because I was a little bit under stress when I was in college studying and working at the same time. Some of my friends had been to Europe and talked to me about it and I decided to drop out for a while and explore the world a little bit and come back and finish, that's what I did," he said.

Cabán decided to become a teacher when he discovered a program called

Teacher Core. He enrolled in the program because 20 percent was dedicated to teaching, another 20 percent was community service and a 60 percent was dedicated to study. It was a combination, one whole package. "I spend two years in that program, so by the time I graduated I had a little experience in teaching," he said.

According to Cabán, living by himself was not easy because he had to work in order to make a living plus study. That's why Vicente Cabán recommends to students — Whatever they are going to do, to do their best. Put their heart into it, go for it and be their best. "There's a lot of competition out there. I think they should study first and then see the world. They have to study to secure something. There will be enough time to travel, the world will still be there," he said.



Melissa Zayas

Vicente Cabán has been a teacher for Antilles High School for 22 years.

MOWW signs a Army Community Covenant

Marc McCormick
El Morro

Fort Buchanan has signed Army Community Covenants with local, municipal and state government representatives strengthening the bond between the garrison and the community. On Oct. 27, 2008, the garrison extended its outreach in the



Marc McCormick

Military Order of World Wars president Ramon A. Negron looks on as Fort Buchanan Commanding Officer Col. Edwin C. Domingo and Garrison Public Affairs Officer Grissel Rosa show off a recently signed Army Community Covenant by the organization's members.

Hauck ————— **From Page 16**



Courtesy Photo

Harry Hauck in his younger days. Notice his T-shirt. Hauck has been instructing neophyte swimmers and divers around Puerto Rico for more than 40 years.

Blacktip eight foot shark while spearing fish in Tortola and Virgin Gorda.

"I tell people that it is hard to visualize a car-jack and someone pointing a gun at you, that's an experience. But if you are in the water and you are in the shark area you can't do anything because you are just floating there," he said. "The most horrible thought is that something can come from nowhere and eat you, not kill you, but eat you."

There are all type of sharks in Puerto Rico, both the Atlantic ocean and the Caribbean, but no white sharks had ever been seen around these waters.

With all these amazing adventures of Harry Hauck, he still trains new divers to enjoy the amazing underwater marine life.

cooperative initiative by signing an Army Community Covenant with veterans group The Military Order of World Wars.

Meeting in Condado, the organization hosted the commanding officer of Fort Buchanan, Col. Edwin C. Domingo. Domingo addressed the group saying, "The Soldiers and the Army family, our volunteer force, are a national treasure and truly, the strength of our nation. Our Soldiers and their families believe in what they do. They take pride in what they do and understand the stakes. We have incorporated the lessons learned from six years on the battlefield in supporting our Soldiers," he said. "We are in an era of persistent conflict. We are an expeditionary Army and our support must adapt to this new norm for our families. We are listening to our families and acting on their guidance."

The Puerto Rico chapter has several flag officers in its membership. The first commanding general of what was then the 65th Infantry Regiment, which evolved into the 65th Regional Readiness Command and now designated the 1st Mission Support Command, Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Antonio Rodriguez-Balinas was inducted as a life member of the organization. Other flag officers attending were Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Félix Santoni, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army; Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Daniel López-Romo and Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Luis E. González-Vale.

"Your Army is moving in the right direction," Domingo said. "We are not where we need to be and it will be a continuing journey, with Puerto Rican veteran organizations."

CSM ————— **From Page 2**

he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.

- He has the wisdom of youth and the energy of old age.
 - This officer should go far, and the sooner he starts, the better.
 - This NCO works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.
 - If brains were dynamite he would not have enough to blow his nose.
 - Constantly sets high goals and never reaches them.
 - This Soldier is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.
- Good luck and keep soldiering on!



Answers

- 1) 116 years
- 2) Ecuador
- 3) Sheep and Horses
- 4) November
- 5) Squirrel fur
- 6) Dogs
- 7) Albert
- 8) Crimson
- 9) New Zealand
- 10) Orange, of course

Veterans honored at Pabellon de la Paz ceremony

Melissa Zayas Moreno
El Morro Contributor

This year Veterans Day Celebration commenced at the Pabellón de la Paz, Luis Muñoz Rivera Park in San Juan. More than 100 men and women veterans from different conflicts attended the activity to honor all of those who fought for democracy.

"Like in past years, our commitment is to honor and recognize the courageous gesture of those that didn't go to conquest nor by interest, but to protect the undefended and the innocents," Procurador del Veterano Luis R. Ramos said. "To all of those that fought for the essence of world democracy, they deserve our recognition."

As part of the activity, a message was given by golfer Juan "Chi Chi" Rodríguez, in which he pointed out the contribution of Puerto Rican soldiers in the different conflicts.

"I am proud of being a veteran. It should be an obligation of all young adults to serve our nation. At age 19 I entered the U.S. Army and was stationed two months at Fort Buchanan and later in Florida and Arkansas, Rodríguez said.

About the services offered to the veterans in Puerto Rico, Luis Ramos said, "I have to admit that we haven't had the chance to penetrate the entire market. We need to let all the veterans know about the services offered in our office. Unfortunately not many look for these services. Indeed, a clinic recently opened for women vets health at the Veterans Hospital."

Ret. Army sergeant Eduardo Mendoza said, "I always attend the Veterans Day Celebration and I also go to the Remembrance Day at the National Cemetery because my wife is buried there. I always recommend to all veterans that they have too proud to serve the American nation, like me who served from 1941 until 1976."

I love the American Nation."

"I feel very content and proud of our veterans. Thanks to them we have a free nation and democracy. But it is a time to give thanks and above all recognize their work. The veterans groups need our support from the Federal Government here in Puerto Rico. As part of our agenda we are working for the Veterans Hospital and the new construction of a National Cemetery in Aguadilla," Senator Roberto Arango said. "One of our objectives is to get our Puerto Rican veterans the same benefits that veterans from the United States receive."

Women veterans can't be left behind. During the Second World War, 200 Puerto Rican women were mobilized. Carmen García Rosado, represent the women veterans that served voluntarily during WWII.

"I just wrote a book titled *'La participación de la mujer veterana de la mujer boricua en la Segunda Guerra Mundial.'* It is a marvelous experience that we have found equality because back then, in 1945, there was a different mentality about the participation of women in war. We were pioneers who went to war voluntarily," Carmen García Rosado said.



Melissa Zayas

Puerto Rican veterans respond to recognition for their services to the nation during Veterans Day activities at San Juan's Pabellón de la Paz.

Green Belt ————— **From Page 1**

program called Power Steering which has templates that help guide the process," Osiris said.

The group meets each week, on Thursdays, working on a proposed six month time schedule to complete each process.

"When we are finished, the process is presented to the command for evaluation, and, if it fits the expected goals, the command will forward it on to IMCOM-SE for certification," Rivera said.

Each member of the group has a local mentor to assist with completion of her project, and, through the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, the team efforts are monitored and supported every step of the way. It is a method whereby team members can get assistance, if they need it, and stay focused to achieving their goals.

"We feel we have the freedom we need to accomplish our task," López said. "And, we have the support we need from the command to be successful," Osiris added.

Following successful completion of their streamlining of individual tasks, the team member(s) will become certified Green Belt Lean Six Sigma Team Members. The valuable designation makes the members available for the commander when he wants to investigate streamlining garrison business practices and following certification, Green Belts becomes mentors for the next generation of employees who want to expand their understanding of Army practices.

An added bonus is when a process is adapted as an official best practice by the garrison — adaptation by other garrison's is possible. Once IMCOM-SE has approved the new practice, it then becomes available to all garrisons to adopt in whole or in part into their systems.



Osiris Soto

Master Sgt. William Russell, DHR; Jose Santiago, Publications, watch as Graham Castillo, Installation legal Office, points out to Green Belt Team Member Magda Rivera how legal relates to the processing of administrative correspondence from the command group.

Medic earns three Purple Hearts during one Iraqi deployment

Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — If Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Sims was a cat, he'd have only six lives left after his yearlong deployment to Iraq with the 1st Armored Division's Company B, 270th Armor Battalion, out of Fort Riley, Kan.

"I was wounded three times in Iraq the last time I was there," Sims said of the deployment that began in January 2005.

Sims, a medic, was riding in a tracked ambulance between two M1-A1 Abrams tanks when a roadside bomb detonated. Shrapnel pierced the vehicle and penetrated his flak vest, puncturing his left lung.

He was evacuated to the hospital in Balad. He spent about three weeks recovering before returning to his unit, but it was only the first of three stays at the hospital.

"They know me there," he said with a chuckle.

Three months after he'd returned to duty, his unit was on a foot patrol when it started taking enemy mortar fire. One mortar landed near Sims.

"Shrapnel hit near my lower left leg, penetrating through the front lower part and coming out the back," he said. "[I] almost, almost lost that limb in that incident, but everything's fine now."

Again, Sims was transported to Balad, where he spent another four weeks recovering from his injuries before rejoining his unit to finish his tour.

Unfortunately, he would endure one more interruption before rotating back home.

It was about 4 a.m., and Company B was patrolling Main Supply Route Tampa, one of the main roads in Iraq, when Sims, who was riding in an Abrams tank, started seeing flashes in the distance.

He doesn't remember anything after calling in the attack, however.

"I took a sniper bullet — 7.62 mm — to the front of the helmet — straight in front, almost right between the eyes," Sims said. The bullet fractured his neck and skull and knocked him unconscious.

"I fell into the turret of the tank," he said, "and when ... [it] turned to fire at the enemy, it broke my right femur."

That earned him a two-month stay in the Balad hospital. He said the care he received there was excellent, and he gave the men in his unit kudos for their part in his survival and recovery.

"I attribute a lot of my speedy recovery ... [to] the care that I received actually on site at the point of injury — quick response from all the people that were there," he said, referring to the soldiers he'd trained in the new Combat Life Saver program. "The people that were actually treating me were people that I had trained. By the time I



Courtesy Photo

Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Sims, a medic who was wounded three times during his last deployment to Iraq, is preparing to deploy again.

got to Balad, I was pretty much good to go. They just had to kind of patch me up."

Sims' last tour in Iraq may have resulted in three Purple Hearts, but he said he's not hesitant about returning.

"No, not at all," he said. "I think that it's a lot safer than when I was there. I think the time that I was there, it was right around the national election time, [and] it was really the peak of all the main [bomb] attacks."

"I think now, it's almost 100 percent turnaround," he added.

It's good he's not timid about returning. His current unit, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Engineer Battalion based out of Schweinfurt, Germany, is certain to deploy at some time.

"We're trying to get all the equipment in and get this unit stood up, because it's the only construction battalion in Europe right now," Sims said. "So, we don't know exactly where we're going yet, but we know we're going to go somewhere."

Sims, who has served 10 years since enlisting right out of high school, recently re-enlisted indefinitely. He hopes to become a doctor or a physician assistant, he said, but he has his sights on one of the Army's top spots if he remains in the Army as an enlisted soldier.

He said he'd like to be the first medic to serve as sergeant major of the Army.

"As a medic, you get a broad spectrum of everything that's in the Army," he added. "You can go to any type of unit, so you're more well-rounded, I think."

Soldier, family find helpful source

Army Sgt. Whitney Houston
Special to American Forces Press Service

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — Being separated from family can trigger stress and anxiety for deployed service-members, especially when children are involved.

But one military family has found a valuable source of help online. The Military OneSource site offers around-the-clock information on parenting, child care, military life, relocation, work, education programs and more.

"Military OneSource was described to me in such a way that if a deployed soldier had a need, like a busted water heater in his house, OneSource could get a plumber out to the house to get it fixed," said Army Maj. Allan Dollison, who is on his second deployment in four years.

Dollison said his wife, Martha, uses the site to keep their children occupied while he is away from home.

"My wife got online and found out about a scholarship program they have that engages children in sporting activities," Dollison said.

"So she applied for the scholarship and got it. So now the Army, through Military OneSource, is paying for my kids to get karate lessons, which is really cool, and I'm very thankful that they were able to do that."

Karate keeps their children — Robert, 8, and Alicia, 9 — busy three times a week, Dollison said. Knowing his family is cared for back home is comforting and enables him to focus on his job, Dollison said.

The demands on Dollison's time may be high, he said, but programs like Military OneSource give him the peace of mind to stay focused on his mission.



Courtesy Photo

Army Maj. Allan Dollison of the 4th Infantry Division and Multinational Division Baghdad's 425th Civil Affairs Battalion credits Military OneSource with making his deployment easier on him and his family.

Warrior Care

Army partners with civilian medical community

D. Myles Cullen
Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — As part of November's Defense Department focus on warrior care, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and key members of his medical team met this week with independent experts in psychology, mental health and resiliency training.

The experts included former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona, former President of the American Psychological Association Dr. Marty Seligman, U.S. Military Academy professor Dr. Michael Matthews, and Dr. Larry Dewey, chief of psychiatry at the Boise, Idaho, Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Casey told the panel that he invited them to Washington to discuss innovative approaches in support of resilience and comprehensive fitness training for an Army stretched and stressed by the increasing demands of an era of persistent conflict.

Carmona echoed Casey's sense of urgency about health care system sustainability, noting that "it is an unprecedented time, ... and we need to transform."

"If we don't," he said, "the [percentage of our gross national product spent on health care] is going to be as high as 20 percent."

After sharing some of their research findings, the experts engaged the Army team on ways they could work together to complement current approaches to caring for soldiers and their families. Among the ideas discussed was the role of character development in enhancing soldiers' resiliency in the face of adversity.

"We can train our soldiers to be resilient from adversity," said Seligman, who is recognized as a world leader in positive psychology.

The panel also talked about ways to help returning warriors see that they can thrive in civilian life, and they discussed the important role that local communities and individual Americans play in the lives of soldiers and their families.

"I very much appreciated the conversation, and I hope we can continue the dialogue," Casey said, adding that continued engagement with outside experts will broaden the Army's perspective and enable it to build a better warrior health care program that might eventually serve as a model for other institutions.



D. Myles Cullen

Left to right, Army Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Eric Schoomaker, Army surgeon general; Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Army chief of staff; Dr. Michael Matthews, U.S. Military Academy professor; Dr. Richard Carmona, former U.S. surgeon general; and Dr. Martin Seligman, former president of the American Psychological Association, talk before having a roundtable discussion at the Pentagon about improving warrior care and health literacy within the Army, Nov. 25, 2008.

1st MSC Soldiers win Area 5 Recruiting Award



Photos Capt. Anthony John

Sgt 1st Class Yamil Santos Ramos, originally from Guynabo, Puerto Rico, 369th Combat Support Center, Puerto Nuevo, explains to Luis Perez-Santiago of Bayamón about the requirements for becoming a member of the Active Guard Reserves during a follow-up visit.

In the background, Sgt. 1st Class Norma Torres-Santos of Morovis, Puerto Rico, 346th Transportation Battalion, collects Perez-Santiago's ASVAB scores that just came in off the fax.

Background left, Sgt. 1st Class Camille Maldonado-Cruz, Carolina, Puerto Rico, assigned to the 448th Engineering Battalion, is seen at the filing cabinet looking for an AGR recruiting packet sample.

At the rear table seated from left to right, are Sgt 1st Class Mayline Vargas-Lugo of Ponce, Puerto Rico; Sgt. 1st Class Francisco J. Pumarejo-Garcia, Bayamón, Puerto Rico; Sgt. 1st Class Jose Malave, Corozal, Puerto Rico and Master Sgt Danilo E. Matos-Perez, Carolina, Puerto Rico, the Senior Retention NCO and area leader for this region.

This team, led by Master Sgt. Matos-Perez, won the Area of the Quarter because they met mission standards above and beyond what was expected. They re-enlisted 65 percent of First Timers, 85 percent of all eligible career Soldiers and 100 percent of all requirements for the mission which resulted in 265 contracts being signed in fiscal year 2008.

PRimeros in the News



Col. Jacob Goldstein, Command Chaplain, 1st Mission Support Command, gives Capt. Pablo Rivera, logistic officer, 346th Transportation Company, Ceiba, a Shield of Strength ID tag which bears an inscription in English and in Spanish of the biblical phrase Joshua 1:9, "I will be strong and courageous. I will not be terrified, or discouraged; for the LORD my GOD is with me wherever I go."



CW3 Roger Wright, 1st MSC Maintenance Officer, presents a plaque of appreciation to CW5 Kenneth Foster, Reserve Component Ordnance Proponent Manager, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, for all the support he provided to the command for introducing the new "Two levels of maintenance procedures-Field and Sustainment." Wright and his maintenance staff organized the 3-day workshop that was held at the Fort Buchanan, Community Club. Foster initially briefed the 1st MSC Command Staff, then he briefed the workshop attendees. It was the first time Army-wide for Foster to present such a brief.

1st Mission Command MROC stands up

Capt. Anthony John
1st MSC PAO

With a mission to mobilize trained and ready U.S. Army Reserve units to perform general military service to the National Command Authority and to augment the active component, the Mobilization, Readiness and Operations Center formerly known as the Emergency Operations Center and the Mobilization and Readiness Division, stood up in with a team of 23 Soldiers and Civilians with Lt. Col. Hector Moran commanding the unit. This includes operations above or below the threshold of war, as directed by higher headquarters.

- The MROC functions by —
- Tasking other RSG staff sections, as necessary, to coordinate and execute command operational and readiness initiatives.
 - Reporting, reviewing, monitoring and analyzing unit readiness through personnel, equipment, and training elements on the Unit Status Report.
 - Planning for support of

general war and special plans and exercises for emergency and contingency plans and operations.

- Supporting priorities for the MSC and its subordinate commands and units.
- Reviewing and providing guidance for Operations, Mobilization, and Deployment. Reviewing, monitoring and analyzing unit mobilization capability through personnel, equipment, and training elements on the Unit Status Report.

The MROC is made up of basically four divisions — Operations, Training, Provost Marshal and Intel. Other subcomponents of the various division include — Logistics, Individual and Collective Training, Physical Security, Force Protection and the Mobilization and Readiness Division.

Previously housed in a building adjacent the on-post gas station, the team was moved to Building 354 in an attempt to have the team close to the 1st MSC leadership, who work less than a stone's throw away.



Photos Capt. Anthony John

Active Guard and Reserve/ Civilian members of the Mobilization, Readiness and Operations Center pose in front of the 1st Mission Support Command's foyer as a means of introducing themselves to the command. Pictured are — (Front Row) Master Sgt. Celso Rodriguez, Master Sgt. Luis Colon Carbo, Lt. Col. Hector Moran, Chief of the MROC, Lt. Col. Raimundo Figueroa, Maj. Benito Perez, Capt. Cesar Rodriguez. (2nd Row) Sgt. 1st Class Walter Gonzalez, Master Sgt. Eric Colon Adjadar, Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Jimenez, Staff Sgt. Luis Melendez. (Last Row) Staff Sgt. Victor Polanco, Staff Sgt. Berenisse Rodriguez, Juan Bobe, Staff Sgt. Mariam Diaz, Sgt. Leslie Cortes. TPU Soldiers not shown are Maj. Felix Rios, Maj. Juan Quintero, Maj. Vincent Jackson, Capt. Hector Orsini, Capt. Edna Flores, Sgt. First Class Carlos Nieves, Sgt. Luis Berdecia, and Sgt. Josue Ortega.



Maj. Benito Perez, Plans Officer and Master Sgt. Celso Rodriguez review mobilization records of upcoming deploying units that belong to the 1st Mission Support Command.



Photos Capt. Anthony John

Juan Bobe, Staff Sgt. Berenisse Rodriguez, operations NCO, Staff Sgt. Mariam Diaz, operations NCO, all play a part in getting Soldiers of the 1st Mission Support Command enrolled in the necessary schools and training that will aid in the individual Soldier being able to deploy as well as the unit deploying with all the necessary personnel.